SOVIET DEMOCRACY AT WORK

Alexander LEVIKOV

TO DISCOVER YOURSELF

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Soviet workers talk about themselves

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FROM THE AUTHOR

Different literary genres have for a long time been mixed up. *Eugene Onegin* which is written in verse is, according to its author, the great Russian poet Pushkin, in fact, a novel. On the other hand *Dead Souls,* which is a masterpiece of prose, was described by its author, Nikolai Gogol, as a poem.

This confusion is particularly bad today, especially in the field of journalism which has recently been inundated by mass media adapting more traditional techniques. No one will be surprised today by the terms "radio magazine," or "film novelette." But if a film novelette may appear on the screen there is no reason why it cannot appear in print.

The authenticity of all I am going to relate has been proven by personal experience. Everyone described here was invited by the "Ekran" studio of Moscow Central Television to star in a full-length documentary on which I also worked. Since I had sound and video tapes from this film, it would seem only logical that I should base this book on the original screenplay. I shall describe what I, as scriptwriter, learnt while working on the film.

Chapter I

MY ADVENTURE BEGINS,

or how a Moscow journalist once offered the Central Television film studio a script on a theme unfamiliar to him

I have only recently started writing about workers. Men on the shop floor had never been the heroes of my books and articles before. I am aware that this may sound rather odd for a journalist living in a country where the working class is the major force in society. But there it is. I began my career as journalist by contributing to student columns in youth newspapers. As a reporter, I covered various events connected predominantly with the world of science. I wrote about the discovery of the solar corona and the unveiling of a super-jet airliner. I covered Yuri Gagarin's epic flight and wrote about the nuclear physicists of Dubna outside Moscow. Later in the 60s when I turned my hand to economic matters, I was concerned solely with questions of management. Although this science was developing rapidly in the West it was virtually unknown for us since we had so successfully managed to forget the brilliant pioneering work of Gastiev and other enthusiasts of the 1920s.

Consequently, the experience I gained while concentrating on problems of management gave me an insight into the varied problems faced by top managers in industry some of whom are still my friends. From time to time I meet them and the heads of various ministry departments and central planning agencies informally. Whenever I am free, I am happy to accept invitations from my scientist friends to take part in symposia on problems of management. However I do not think I have ever been invited to attend a meeting of factory workers none of whom are my friends. Neither have I been invited to participate in a journalists' conference on the country's working class. My intense interest in the managerial problems of the Soviet economy has received a rather unusual coverage in the Western press which has commented on some of my articles.

The Alexander Levikov of these Western commentators is briefly the following: either someone who is openly sceptical about his country's plans... or who is suggesting a dose of capitalism for Russia... or accusing his government of neglecting consumer goods... or extolling US business...

Leaving such assessments to the conscience of my critics who are guilty of not a few distortions when quoting from my articles,[1] I shall quote some extracts which are typical of the American and European press:

"... The plan itself was not criticized but questions posed to Nikolai Mirotvortsev, a deputy chair-

[1] These are some comments from *Literaturnaya Gazeta's* translators: "The *International Herald Tribune's* correspondent is not accurate in quoting Levikov's article and has, in some cases, in fact distorted its meaning. No sentences were underlined in the original... *The New York Times* correspondent has added a few words in square brackets... the last four words were not in the original... In Levikov's article this is a question and not an exclamation."

man of the State Planning Commission, indicated that *Literaturnaya Gazeta* has doubts on the way the needs of the population are being met. The paper devoted a full page to an interview with Mr. Mirotvortsev conducted by A. Levikov, one of its correspondents...

"After Mr. Mirotvortsev listed some statistics to show how things are improving, Mr. Levikov said, 'The figures are impressive but as a consumer I'm interested in the following: Will the shelves in stores be bursting with goods as the result of the new five-year plan? How close are we to nearing the full satisfaction of demand?...'

"Mr. Levikov, perhaps speaking for those who have waited a long time for a car, exclaimed, 'The queue for cars will still not be ended in this five-year plan.'" (the *International Herald Tribune* of February 18, 1971 which carried an article by *The New York Times* Moscow correspondent captioned "Soviet Paper Skeptical on 5-Year Plan.")

"...Hastening to assert that the shelves would indeed groan with goodies, Mirotvortsev attempted to detail the improved lot of the Soviet consumer as compared with a decade ago. But Levikov cut him short, retorting sharply: 'Comparison with the past is not always convincing. In the past, people often had no shoes and clothes.'" (*Newsweek*, March 1, 1971, p. 15.)

"...The inability of the overstrained state-run service industry to keep pace with the rising expectations of Soviet consumers has fostered a rare public proposal for experimenting with a limited restoration of private enterprise...

"Alexander Levikov, the author of the article proposing legalized private trade, cites his attempt to soundproof his front door through a state shop, which would take orders only on weekdays when

he was unable to wait in line. 'If you don't want it, don't order it,' he was curtly told. But on the following Saturday a red-haired fellow knocked at his door and offered to do the job, on the side, for 22 rubles–$26.40–six rubles above the fixed price. The state service shops never knocked. 'They didn't need me,' he observed." (the *International Herald Tribune*, August 11, 1972, p. 9, "A Dose of Capitalism for Russia?")

"Soviet business practice is so entangled in red tape that it has caused chronic shortages and work stoppages and severely retarded economic growth. That was the message of a long article in this week's Literary Gazette, which declared war on bureaucracy and urged the adoption of some streamlined U.S. business techniques.

" 'I don't like the notorious American way of life, with its hypocritical standards, eternal fears, cruelty and social contrasts,' wrote efficiency expert Alexander Levikov. 'But I was very pleased when I read the book *Businesslike America.*'

"This was a reference to a recently published study of American business practice written by Nikolai N. Smelyakov, a deputy minister of foreign trade. . .

" 'Though all of this, of course, is dictated by the interests of the competitive struggle, which is alien to us', Mr. Levikov noted, 'such American business practices are, nevertheless, a good thing.' " (the *International Herald Tribune*, November 24-25, 1973, p. 9, "Russian Extols U.S. Business.")

"A surprising tribute to the US economic system was recently paid by Moscow's *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in an article by Mr. Alexander Levikov." (*Le Monde*, December 2-3, 1973, "In Praise of Business.")

And so on... I think this is quite sufficient.

I would like to note that articles describing Mr. Levikov as someone trying to "overthrow socialism" amuse Levikov himself. If all this were true then how does it tie in with the assertions made by my Western colleagues about press control in the USSR? If all this is not true then how does it match up with their untiring assertions about the objectivity, accuracy and independence of the Western press? I will leave it to the authors of the articles quoted above to pick whichever answer they prefer.

I should perhaps add that *Literaturnaya Gazeta* continues to carry features by its special correspondent on the subject and that Sovietskaya Rossia Publishers have recently brought out another of my books *The Men of Business* incorporating "A" and "B", "Stimulating Activity" and other articles from *Literaturnaya Gazeta* which provoked the comments in the Western press mentioned above.

I do hope the reader will forgive this rather drawn-out introduction.

All my life I have been training for a career which I was never to practice. As a boy I had dreams of making a career in the army. At the age of fourteen I enrolled at a special artillery school and then went on to an officers' training school. Later, however, I took the first opportunity that presented itself to get discharged from the service. I then decided to devote myself to law and so went to university. I graduated but never practiced as a lawyer since journalism had by then attracted me. Apparently my own son has inherited his father's lack of staying-power. After leaving school where he studied mainly literature, he entered the engineering department of a college and, having finished with a diploma in thermal power engineering, he joined a jazz band where he tried his hand at com-

position and performance on an electric organ. If you now suppose that my wife Sofia Knizhnik who, like her husband is now a journalist, has been trained for a field which has nothing to do with journalism, you will be right; she has a diploma in physics. Our careers might serve as a good illustration of the motto: *To Discover Yourself.* The absence of unemployment allows a blissful sense of freedom since one is not chained to one profession which, once chosen, may turn out to be the result of a romantic mistake.

Now that you know something about the author, I shall return to my story.

I was a little surprised at first.

When I heard over the phone the soft voice (with a Ukrainian accent) of Lev Onishko, an editor of the Central Television's film studio "Ekran," I was somewhat taken aback: "A screenplay for a film about workers? Fine, but. . ."–"I know you write about other things."–"Well, why do you want me to do it then?"–"We like the way you write."–"Yes, but they're all about managers and management!"–"Why don't you write something about industrial workers for a change?. . ."

Feeling rather stunned by Onishko's logic I put down the receiver after promising to think it over. But I forgot all about my promise as soon as I plunged into my current work. But Onishko, evidently did not give up easily, and a month later he called me again, and then again two weeks after that. . .

They say that if you can force yourself to think about ants all the time you may become a great naturalist. I have not tried that, but I am quite prepared to believe that this may indeed be the case. Eventually, something of an idea began to take shape in my head. I told my wife about it and she found it interesting. I sat down at my typewriter

and wrote a letter to the film studio. The next morning I posted it as early as possible in case I had any second thoughts. This is what I wrote:

"Dear colleagues,

I wonder if you would be interested in a screen play based on the following idea. Since the working class is the foundation of Soviet society and plays a leading role in Soviet society it has been the subject of constant comment in the media and in literature. For all that, however, in art and particularly in documentary films the face of the worker, as one sociologist put it, 'is still being made to reflect the muscular tension of his muscles and his tired body—simply the *physical* fatigue he experiences at the end of a day's work!' I thought it might be more interesting to make a film about the way today's worker thinks and about how he looks at the social and moral problems of modern society. I want to show how he is freeing himself from the position of being a mindless automation performing set operations and what his place is in the chain which is now linking science with production. Writers, artists and sociologists have described the inner world of today's worker. The investigator knows a lot about him but not everything. Hence the importance of getting ordinary workers to speak about themselves. The very idea of such a film—thinking aloud—calls for a small cast. But by what criteria can one find suitable people? Should one choose well-known workers who have been decorated and have the title of Hero of Socialist Labour? Or perhaps worker-deputies to the USSR Supreme Soviet, or workers active in public life? Or should one choose, relying on one's own intuition, workers with a distinct personality and talent? If one takes the latter course how does one avoid laying oneself open to a charge of subjectivism and bias?

I thought that the choice of 'stars' from the groups already mentioned would be either orthodox or arbitrary and so I chose a fourth alternative. The film would be about workers who are free-lance journalists and whose books have been published by major publishing houses. I know that there are quite a few of them. We could select those who had been writing on a regular basis for some years. They now felt a need to air their views about pressing social problems and their articles often provoked lively comment in the scientific community and in the press.

In *The Record of Engineer Ganshin* by Vladimir Kantorovitch I found the following passage, 'I would like to conclude this chapter with a comment by a worker in Leningrad who is something of a born sociologist. For Anatoli Solipatrov sociology is far more than just a hobby, it is his way of looking at the world... Solipatrov is a skilled metal worker with over twenty years' experience... I don't know whether critics, writers and scientists have paid attention to Solipatrov's comments but I was impressed both by what he was saying and also by the fact that he was an ordinary industrial worker... I have repeatedly quoted Solipatrov in my contributions to the press...'

Thus I felt that looking for 'worker-journalists' would help us select a suitable cast for the film. I am not suggesting the film will be a sketch about them but rather their reflections about life.

I would be grateful to hear your opinion.

Yours sincerely,

A. Levikov."

Onishko phoned me a couple of days later but did not sound particularly encouraging: "I thought it was an interesting idea myself, but I can't pro-

mise anything... It depends on the boss. You see, it's such an important topic. The high-ups on the Radio and TV Committee will probably want to give their opinion on it... I'll keep you posted. I hope you will be in Moscow for the next couple of months?"

I chuckled to myself: it was all too familiar. The whole protracted bureaucratic routine of co-ordinating things, getting them endorsed, properly approved, and cleared for publication, etc.–that slow and screechy horse-drawn cart of red tape, which was the favourite target of my satirical pen. For years I had tried not to miss a chance of dashing ink in the glum face of the bureaucrat.

To my utter surprise Onishko called me back a few days later and proclaimed, his voice ringing with triumphant jubilation: "The boss really went overboard about the idea! The high-ups gave the go-ahead! And it's not just a twenty-minute quicky as originally planned but a full-length documentary that we have to do now! We'll sign the contract right away! Let us know the number of your bank account for us to send you the advance immediately! When do you think you could send us the script? We ought to have everything well in advance. It's difficult topic..."

I was quite overcome by all this and it was only when Onishko had finished speaking that I recovered enough to carry on the conversation. "It's a difficult topic!" Now, if I know anything about their jargon, this could mean only one thing. His boss had apparently said: "Let him write something away, give him a minimal advance, and we'll see what happens. Tell him to step on it because we'll probably have to chop and change everything dozens of times."

Still, it was good news and my wife and I set to work at once. Some time later the script, signed Sofia Knizhnik and Alexander Levikov, was lying on the desk of the film studio's editor-in-chief. It seemed a logical enough idea for us to write the script together. Unlike myself, my wife had experience of TV-work since she had worked on several TV films. Words like "editing," "synchronization," "narrator," which always bored me, were music to her ears. We hoped that should any disagreements arise in our work then our relationship would be more able to deal with them than any studio contract. This arrangement also meant that the extra fee was an additional, if minor, incentive.

We attended our first "editorial council." I even wore a tie for the occasion although I normally try to do without one. The studio is in the complex of the Central Television next to the famous Ostankino TV-tower. We arrived to find a panel of ten waiting for us. I thought they seemed very encouraging and I cheered up immediately but Sofia, with her wealth of experience of prowling in the TV jungle, advised me not to hope for too much.

A young lady with a nervous face and the wheezy voice of a chain-smoker opened the proceedings. She said bluntly that there was no script to speak of, that what the studio had received showed without doubt that the authors were totally incapable of writing a script. There was no way of telling what they were really trying to say, she said. She had made quite a few films about workers herself and knew that it was pointless to try to show them as intellectuals. They were workers and had to be shown as such. The thing was to show others how well they worked. "I hope," she concluded with withering sarcasm looking straight at us, "you're not going to do a film on how doctors of philosophy

and physics try to work as stevedores? Each to his own!"

The angry young lady was followed by a balding man, smoking a pipe who looked like a professor. "I don't care," he began, frowning indifferently, "what your worker-correspondents write about. I don't want to hear their words of wisdom. What I would like to see instead is a resourceful chap with his eye always on the main chance, or an ascetic worker with flashing eyes, eager to propagandize his beliefs, or a . . . You give me typical characters, symbols. . . But I couldn't care less about what they have to say."

We had a shower of friendly and well-meaning advice. The people in the studio tried to get us to abandon the idea of a film about workers' reflections on life. Instead, they advised us to do a series of short films showing them with their workmates, or en famille, or, better still, out hunting or fishing. . . Or perhaps we could show them attending evening school. . . or at a works party. . . Discouraged, we defended our script half-heartedly, realizing only too well that we were fighting a losing battle. They would not accept our idea and we would never agree to a stereotyped approach. . . Things were building up to a climax when, suddenly, the chairman cut us short, "Just what are you talking about? What's all this about fishing? They're offering us a drama with real content!. . . Ever since. . . (and he proceeded to list some famous films of several years back) we've never had anything like it. This is our chance. No question about it, we accept the script. But we would ask the authors to take note of some of the comments that have been made here this afternoon."

At this point I sobered up completely. I recalled that even the *International Herald Tribune,* the

European joint publication of three leading American papers, considered me an "efficiency expert."

"I should like to thank you very much," I began as calmly as possible, "I'm glad to see my ideas have been acknowledged. I should just like to make one small request: will you please list all your comments and suggestions in the minutes of this meeting. Just for form's sake!. ."

I wouldn't agree to compromise my stance and to try and to make two and two equal five, even if they offered me three times the fee they had promised. Let them worry about the details. We left for a cup of coffee sure that we had failed completely. Could it really be easier to get articles "Extolling US Business" printed than to get permission for a film where workers spoke their minds?

Next day my wife left for the Black Sea where our daughter was enjoying herself and demonstrating to her granny her disdain for conformism. Left alone, I began looking through my mail concerning the publication of my article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta.* A week later Onishko phoned again.

"Everything's okay," he announced brightly. "The minutes are ready, come over."

Had they managed to make two and two equal five? But I thought it was worth going to see just the same . . . I recalled an anecdote about someone in a tavern who liked the sound of a dish called "grouse and horse-meat." "What's the ratio of grouse to horse meat?" he asked the tavern-keeper who replied, smiling kindly, "Half and half, sir, we use one grouse per horse."

It turned out however, that the studio was basically accepting our script as it was with just a few changes. . . I glanced at what was to be cut out and realized immediately that in this tavern the mixture was genuinely half and half. Even so it was not as

bad as I had expected. We soon started what in the cinema jargon is called the "running-up" period. For us this meant looking for a suitable cast and engaging in endless arguments with our director Vladimir Budkov, a well-groomed, stout, middle-aged man who was, unlike most of his colleagues, extremely polite. "It's not on," was his pet phrase along with "bob-sleigh" by which he meant a "hodge-podge of finely cut, wishy-washy scenes and sequences." "We'll have a 'bob-sleigh' just here," he would explain to us with inspiration, "followed by a lively street scene and then, after a brief but dynamic 'bob-sleigh,' we'll switch back to the main theme. I reckon the finale should be a solemn, ceremonial 'bob-sleigh' to music by Bach." Needless to say, we immediately dubbed our director "Bob-sleigh."

Chapter II

AUDITIONS,

or what Soviet workers write about

Throughout the "running-up" period we sat in a public library reading every article and book we could find written by a worker. We did, after all, need a worker who was also a publicist.

There turned out to be quite a few of them. Some wrote for *Pravda* and *Izvestia,* some for *Sotsialisticheskaya Industria* (Socialist Industry), and some for *Komsomolskaya Pravda,* the USSR's leading paper for the young. Most wrote for the trade union paper, *Trud* (Labour), which carries contributions from men on the shop floor in every issue. Workers wrote on a wide range of topics of varying importance, from short letters from factories and plants to feature articles not unlike those written by professional journalists. Articles written by workers were also published in national papers such as *Sovetskaya Kultura* and *Literaturnaya Gazeta.*

These articles were marked by a distinct tone of insistence and a spirit of constructive criticism. Although the worker-authors considered socialism and the Soviet way of life the only desirable alternative, they pointed to drawbacks and mistakes

which were impeding progress. We noted down opinions, trying to guess the authors' personality and to assess their potential for ad-libbing and for unscripted interviews before a TV-camera or a mike. We also tried to estimate the degree of their commitment and their capacity for maintaining their position in an open discussion.

For an ordinary feature film the director shoots brief sequences using several different actors and looks through them later choosing the one he likes best. He usually knows the actors in advance and simply has to select the most suitable. We naturally did not intend turning workers into actors, dragging them through a long series of auditions. With only the press articles of total strangers to work on, our job was to "run through" mentally how each one of them would make out in the projected film. What if someone turns out to be tongue-tied? What if someone else turns out to be unsuitable in some other way...? The "what ifs" were endless.

We could, of course, have interviewed the authors beforehand to explain exactly what we wanted them to do. But the fear of hurting those whom we would eventually have to reject stopped us from doing so. A worker who earned society's respect and attention by his labour was not to be hurt in this way. It's hard to say to what extent a documentary film-maker is obliged to comply with universal ethical standards. I feel that the "candid camera" and "hidden microphone" are unpleasant because they are too reminiscent of methods used by Peeping Toms. As a reporter, I also use a tape-recorder, but I always have it on the table in an interview.

Perhaps I'm just being oversensitive. Be that as it may, during our "auditions" we departed from this

principle only once and then not very successfully. We resolved never to try it again. The man involved on that occasion was Kim Andreyev, a Moscow fitter who had published a number of articles in *Sotsialisticheskaya Industria,* a newspaper of the CC CPSU. Kim described the daily life of his fellow workers emphasizing, in particular, those aspects which disturbed him.

From Kim Andreyev's publications

"... This is what I think. We ought to care more about people's psychological state. If we did, we'd find it easier to meet production deadlines. To do this we need to teach everyone and ourselves how to get along with one another, how to live as a team...

"Often when worker's pride has been hurt by someone's rudeness nobody bothers to find out who is to blame.

"I think that one's pride as a worker, one's self-respect, is as powerful an incentive as skill and experience. We never ask ourselves why we go to the factory day after day. Everybody seems to know why–to earn our bread, to keep our families. That's true, and nobody will argue with it. But is it all that a working man should care about? The answer is no. He needs more than that. He needs to feel satisfied with his own social status. He needs to feel that not only the products of his work are needed by the factory and by his fellow workers but that he himself as a person, as an individual, is needed too. Then he needs to feel proud of his factory, of its way of life and standards." (From K. Andreyev's article "Repercussions...," *Sotsialisticheskaya Industria,* August 16, 1974.)

* * *

"Some of our workers are highly skilled but they're a bit too fond of the bottle. They're allowed to get away with it, though, because they are so skilled. Anatoli Khusainov is a typical example.

"Khusainov's hangovers became increasingly frequent. His workmates went along with the foreman who turned a blind eye to Khusainov just as he had to them in similar cases.

"The foreman, of course, acted like this because it was a convenient way of ensuring that a worker was obliged to do what he wanted should any emergency arise. This pact of mutual assistance means that the 'indulgent' foreman can always count on his 'obliging' worker. It is no secret that some areas of work are particularly undermanned since they have the highest turnover of workers. Khusainov was approached by his foreman just when workers were needed particularly badly. All this is unpleasant enough but I think that the corrupting influence the foreman may have is far worse than these 'little tricks' themselves. Indeed, each time the foreman asked Khusainov to move to a new bench he spouted fine words about the tradition of mutual assistance among workingmen, about a sense of duty, conscientiousness and the convenience of being a 'jack of all trades'...

"I have observed a similar situation on the shop floor myself and know that Khusainovs are to be found where... the foreman, who is entrusted with the moral education of young workers puts the fulfilment of the plan first, trying to achieve this with the least effort, on the cheap. Thus workers like Khusainov are not uncommon wherever the foremen lose their sense of responsibility for educating their men in the right spirit." (From K. Andreyev's

article "A Convenient Worker," *Sotsialisticheskaya Industria,* August 2, 1973.)

* * *

"Young people are always keen to assert themselves. The reasoning is roughly as follows: 'I am a wage-earning adult, and can often bring in good money. I can enjoy the good things of life our society has to offer.' The question is how to use them and for what purpose... Most of my workmates give roughly the reply: 'What's the point in thinking about that now that I'm going to leave to do National Service?' Should we, perhaps, accept this kind of logic? The answer is an emphatic no! This line of thinking epitomizes a parasitical attitude, an infantilism that has lingered into adulthood. In an effort to find out for myself why some young people develop this kind of attitude while at the same time shouting from the rooftops about their right to be treated as adults, I circulated among my workmates some copies of a brochure containing a story about someone their age, *When You Are Eighteen* by Konstantin Simonov. The writer describes his thoughts about the short life of Anatoli Merzlov, a member of the YCL in Ryazan, who died while trying to save his ancient tractor and a field of corn from being destroyed by fire in the unprecedented heat wave and drought of 1972. What do you think of him? What do you think impelled Merzlov to save his tractor? What would you have done in his place? These were the questions I put to my younger workmates.

"Their reply to the first question was unanimous: they all thought Anatoli was a great guy. But why? There was some difference of opinion on that but

perhaps the fullest answer was this: 'Anatoly literally snatched his tractor off the scrap-heap with the conscientiousness of a mother caring for her child.' The same young man gave the following reply to the third question: 'Anyone would have done the same in his place. I certainly would.' The young man was Sasha Timchenko who is now in the army." (From K. Andreyev's article "The Earth on TV," *Sotsialisticheskaya Industria,* August 2, 1973.)

* * *

After reading Andreyev's articles Bob-sleigh said, "We'll have to look at the man first, otherwise I won't pass him. What if he stutters?" After some altercation we reluctantly gave in.

Kim Andreyev lives in a quiet street lined with lime trees not far from the Lenin Stadium, which is to be the principal venue of Olympics 1980. The hall is lined with bookshelves filled with numerous folders of newspaper and magazine cuttings, their spines marked neatly: "Publicist Georgi Radov," "Writer Vassili Shukshin," "Turner Boris Danilov." The typical reference library of a worker interested in free-lance journalism. Some of the folders contained his own articles written over the years.

The crowd of TV men led by the director, swept into the flat, satisfying their curiosity without bothering to ask permission, unceremoniously opening some of the folders and casting inquisitive glances at the host. We felt awkward and Kim Andreyev, a lean, sad-eyed man was, to say the least, visibly embarrassed. He was, of course, a poor speaker and kept turning his whole body to whomever he was addressing. It was fortunate that his wife and son were out at the time.

When we left, Bob-sleigh gave his categorical, hard-hitting verdict: "No good. The man is tongue-tied." We tried to object saying that the metal worker Andreyev was, on the contrary, very suitable, straightforward, decent, with an intellectual turn of mind, perhaps a bit on the nervous side and apt to go off the point a little but that was not a great sin. The main thing was that he was quite capable of expressing attitudes typical for people in his position and had his own outlook on things.

Unfortunately Vladimir Budkov, our director, and his assistants were unanimous and we were overruled. The most we managed to achieve on that occasion was to talk Bob-sleigh into having another look at Kim some other time, under different circumstances. The chance to do that presented itself soon enough. The editorial board of *Sotsialisticheskaya Industria,* the newspaper which published most of Andreyev's articles, was holding a briefing session to give journalists the chance to review recent issues. Andreyev was among those invited. Editor-in-chief Vassili Golubyev, did not mind the film crew attending since workers were frequently present at editorial meetings.

The meeting on that occasion was held in a large room with a table in the middle. The participants took their seats around the table while we settled down at the back of the room by the door. The observers were the first to speak. They were followed by the deputy editor-in-chief. Then it was Kim Andreyev's turn to take the floor. We listened with bated breath, casting sidelong glances at Bob-sleigh. Andreyev spoke about an article contributed by a fellow metal worker. Entitled "In the Heat of the Moment" the article described how people often lost their temper at work and how even foremen and managers sometimes preferred to use strong lan-

guage rather than persuasion and reason. Kim backed his fellow worker on every point and advised the newspaper men to give more attention to the subject of relations on the shop floor.

Bob-sleigh stuck to his guns saying that Andreyev was a better writer than he was a speaker. We were forced to agree, but the unpleasant lesson we learned made us insist on no more interviews prior to selecting the cast. "People aren't horses. We can't go round counting their teeth," I told Bob-sleigh, "and a documentary film is not a race course. Enough is enough. We'll select those whose articles we like and to hell with preliminary interviews."

Bob-sleigh had to give in this time. We again started reading articles and books written by workers. We found that Moskovski Rabochi (Moscow Worker) Publishers alone had brought out over three hundred books by worker-authors over the past ten years in a total print of one million copies.

Victor Yermilov, one of the authors, who assembles pneumatically-controlled machine tools, is highly skilled or, as his fellow-workers call him, "a micron catcher." Yermilov, a CP-member of long standing, has been elected deputy to the USSR Supreme Soviet, the Soviet parliament, and is currently a member of the Lenin Prize Committee for achievements in science and engineering... He is well-read and has quite a few prominent personalities among his friends. This has no doubt helped him in his work on the book we read, which is a documentary story in which lyrical descriptions of nature are interspersed with scenes from everyday life and penetrating profiles intermingled with journalistic digressions. The chief merit of this book is the clear idea it provides of the author's personal outlook on the world around him.

Yermilov's book *Those Difficult but Happy Roads* was serialized by *Sotsialisticheskaya Industria.*

The same publishing house has also put out *A Life-Time Search* by Boris Danilov, a turner. This is an informative account of the work done by inventors and innovators. Danilov? The name rang a bell. Indeed we remembered that some of his articles were in Kim Andreyev's reference-library. This was an indication that the man was popular with his readers, fellow workers like himself. He looked like a suitable candidate for the film.

Another possibility was Yuri Kortnyev, a worker from Moscow's Dynamo electrical equipment plant. Sovetskaya Rossiya Publishers had lately brought out his latest book and several of his feature articles had been published in various magazines and *Literaturnaya Gazeta.*

From Yuri Kortnyev's publications

"Whenever cases of pilfering come to light the men on the shop floor react strongly against the indifference displayed by some of their number to the plant's property. Pilfering insults the working man's sense of morality and dignity. The men also protest against the reasons underlying pilfering...

I remember well how, on a construction site, one of our lads, Ivan Sosnin, once took off his tarpaulin jacket and covered an air compressor against the rain. He is a real worker who respects property in general and essential things in particular.

But occasions when you see property neglected and left to rot away do not foster a desire to take good care of property. There was a bizarre case in a Moscow factory. One Sunday young workers clearing away a rubbish heap at the back of the

plant made a surprising discovery... a bulldozer. One of them, a tankman who had recently been demobbed, got into the cab to check if everything was in order. It was. Another lad hared-off to the garage to fetch some diesel fuel to get the thing moving...

However, when the young men asked the garage chief to accept the 'newly-discovered' bulldozer he refused on the grounds that the thing was not on his books. For him to add the bulldozer to his fleet would require a special document, a deed of transfer or some such thing signed by the higher-ups. Needless to say, none of those who had discovered the bulldozer had ever drawn up anything of the kind in his life nor had the faintest idea of how to go about it.

And so the bulldozer was left standing solitarily on the edge of the cleared dump. It was abandoned along with the shovels the young men had left lying about. It was pointless for anyone to try to shame them for neglecting to put their shovels back where they came from. The bulldozer, which surely cost a bit more than the shovels, was abandoned as if it were a worthless heap of scrap metal, which it certainly was not...

If I were later to discover that nails, screws and screwdrivers went missing from the same plant I would not have been in the least surprised...

The inevitability of punishment is doubtless an important factor in the fight against pilfering. But I doubt if punishment is either the only or a sufficiently effective weapon against industrial pilfering.

The shop floor must cease to be a place where all sorts of useful and valuable things get neglected or lost. Sometimes quite remarkable things can happen: you throw out something which as far as the factory is concerned is pure rubbish, and as soon as it's gone it turns out to have been actually quite valuable.

How can anyone allow a situation to develop where a useful thing just lies about doing nothing but getting in the way. (Incidentally, I have noticed that the more valuable a thing is the more trouble it causes on the shop floor if it is not needed in the production process. It beats me why it should be so. But there it is).

Any disruption of the normal course of things is usually noticed instantly. For example, a young lad who had just joined the workshop brought his mother's kitchen knife in his pocket and, having screwed up enough courage, asked his foreman permission to have it ground. Mother had complained the knife was blunt. You see, the young man thought that using the plant's equipment for personal needs during the lunch break was an infringement of the rules.

But when a couple of months later the same young man saw first-rate ball-bearings worth sixty roubles each rejected because they were slightly off tolerance, he picked up a ball-bearing, smashed it with a sledge hammer, annealed it and made a vicious-looking kitchen knife, one that the foreman lost no time in taking away from him...

Not everyone can grasp a scheme of things where a thing always has a constant value and owner and where at the same time the men on the shop floor squander the tools and materials of their trade with reckless generosity.

Should it depend on personal responsibility? Yes, of course. Only that is still an abstract formula. Personal responsibility will only be effective when everyone involved develops a sense of it based on common responsibility. We have to remember that in this country for the first time in human history men have to deal with two forms of property—

public and personal. An intelectual conflict is, therefore, inevitable. All the more reason for everyone to take care to do everything in his power to help public considerations gain the upper hand over personal ones. Soviet economic management should shield people from possible mistakes in this regard..." (From Yu. Kortnyev's book *A Show Trial*, Moscow, 1974.)

For us the problem of "pilfering on the job" had a tragicomic manifestation: Kortnyev had been "stolen" from us. It was as if the man had slipped through the dragnet our film crew had set up outside the factory gate. Bob-sleigh phoned Kortnyev to invite him to take part in our film only to hear his reply, "Fine, but what are you going to pay me?" Bob-sleigh, rather taken aback, tried to explain to him that only professional actors were entitled to a fee for appearing in feature films, that even professional writers and academicians took it as a great honour to appear in documentary films, since it helped their public image. And would you believe how Kortnyev replied? He said that he was a professional himself, that he had been one for two whole weeks. You see, he had signed a new contract to write a book for a Moscow publishing house and had resigned from the plant... So that was that... No Kortnyev for us. The whole idea of the film was to use only those who were genuine shop floor workers. Poor Kortnyev... But perhaps he had just got fed up with his double life, as it were, being a writer among his fellow workers and a worker among real writers. So he decided to cross over to the other shore. But the big question, of course, is whether he would make it to the other shore or not.

The field of our search was gradually shrinking. The next candidate after Anatoli Solipatrov, a metal

worker from Leningrad, whom we picked without a moment's hesitation, was Boris Danilov, a precision metalworker from Moscow.

From Boris Danilov's publications

"... Having a number of patents to my name, which have now been implemented both in the USSR and abroad, I have a certain amount of business experience, most of it, unfortunately, gained in bitter fighting against bureaucracy, conservatism and fear of modern technology. After quite a few sharp setbacks, I was ready, like Hermann in Pushkin's story *The Queen of Spades*, 'to give up the struggle and seek my fortune elsewhere...'—in fact, I'd thought of taking up fishing. But when I read an article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* about Voldemar Bush I felt I had to reply and immediately wrote a letter to the editor.

V. Gorbatchevsky wrote the article. Like any experienced journalist, he was advisedly ambiguous, leaving it to his readers to work out for themselves whether it was good or bad that a gifted precision worker and inventor had had to abandon his important literary pursuits and return to the shop floor. I think there can be no two ways about it. It was extremely unfortunate...

Many factory managers reason roughly as follows: highly skilled precision and lathe operators are few and far between and so how can you allow one of them to have his head up in the clouds for too long? Of course you can't. Ridiculous!

I know other outstanding worker-inventors, apart from V. Bush and have known some of them for some time. Boris Yegorov, for instance, is a metalworker-mechanic at Moscow's punched card machi-

nery plant. He has designed several automatic machine tools producing microscopic components and coils with a wire-thickness of 0.01 mm. Some of his machine tools have increased productivity by 800 per cent and taken a lot of the drudgery and monotony out of the work of many. A film was made about him with the rather intriguing title: 'The Secret of NS-E', the letters standing for the initials of the Russian words 'winding lathe developed by Yegorov.' His lathes and automatic devices have been displayed at industrial exhibitions in Brussels, New York and other cities in Europe and North America. Many foreign firms have bought patents for them.

Needless to say, Boris Yegorov's inventions had also benefited his own plant. Like Bush, he had his own workshop and design office. Or rather used to have. Nowadays he is working alone and his output as an inventor has recently sharply declined. I spoke to him about it. 'What's the problem, Boris? Why are you on your own now?' He replied evasively and reluctantly, just as Bush had done when Gorbatchevsky had asked him a similar question: 'Well, that's how things have worked out, perhaps it's better this way...' After interviewing Yegorov's fellow workers at the plant I learned that his relations with the former factory manager had been the problem. His successor had tried to reestablish Yegorov's experimental workshop but failed and the outlook now was not particularly good.

Could such a development be attributed to mere chance, an unfortunate combination of circumstances? I don't think so and to prove my point I'm going to quote the case of Robert Fedoseyev, also a worker and inventor. At thirty-two Fedoseyev, formerly a mechanic at Moscow's Tizpribor plant, had over three hundred inventions to his credit. He was

the country's leading inventor. Only Thomas Edison would have been able to compete with him. And yet our own answer to Edison has recently been all but branded a parasite. Fedoseyev had left his plant for a time in order to devote all his energy and time to his unenviable battle with bureaucracy, to get his numerous inventions accepted by factories and plants throughout the USSR. Saving industry a lot of time and money and, working ten to twelve hours a day, Fedoseyev went to factories and plants in almost every republic. He never stayed too long at any one plant before moving on to the next and so came close to being accused by bureaucrats as a sponger on society. Ridiculous! A good thing it would be for everyone if talented people like Fedoseyev were indeed allowed 'not to work anywhere' so they could devote themselves full-time to design.

Indeed why is it that many factory managers and even some inventors and innovators themselves think that inventing is a kind of hobby to be pursued only in one's free time, like dominoes, stamp-collecting, or skiing?

An inventor is no less a creative worker than a painter or a composer. The latter, however, being recognized professionals, are able to free-lance, and their right to do so is protected by the relevant legislation. Their work is well paid and rightly so and they are not obliged to make a nuisance of themselves going round government departments and ministries begging for remuneration for their inventions. On the other hand, an innovator who demands no more than what he deserves is often considered to be motivated purely by self-interest.

I was glad to learn from Gorbatchevsky's article that at a meeting with newspaper men Yuri Maksarev, Chairman of the State Committee for Inventions

and Discoveries had called for a special department to be set up to protect inventors' copyright. This would release inventors from the humiliating role of humble beggars and would encourage more specialists to go in for inventing. I could not agree more." (From B. Danilov's article "Inventing: the Roses and the Thorns," *Literaturnaya Gazeta,* February 23, 1973.)

Meanwhile the "running-up" period was drawing to an end thus bringing us closer to the actual filming. This was as symbolic for me as crossing the border between Europe and Asia is for a traveller: however hard you try to see a difference in the scene floating past the carriage window no visible border line is discernible. Not so with Bob-sleigh who saw special significance in the event which only he could understand. Looking at him, I began to think that the "running-up" period was like an avalanche or a tidal wave or at least a surprise visit by a tax inspector. The closer we were to filming, the more impatient and frightened he became. He was irritable, and nervous and this nervousness transmitted itself to us. Sometimes he would give us a ring long past midnight or in the small hours of the morning. Whenever he did, my wife would pass the receiver to me with a trembling hand saying, "God, it's him again!"

"I hope I haven't got you out of bed?" he would begin rather apologetically. "Just one question. Are you sure Solipatrov won't back out? Is it all settled with Danilov? What about the third man? No third man yet? You must be joking! We're ready to film!"

In the end, Bob-sleigh picked the third man himself. "Have you read anything by Yuri Sidorov? You haven't? What on earth have you been doing all this while?"

From Yuri Sidorov's publications

"You may stumble over something every day for years. But then you go somewhere for the first time and you immediately notice things the local people don't: a fresh eye sees better. Something of this sort happened to me during a recent visit to the theatre. There was a soldier in the play who just stood around looking very dashing, but not actually doing anything. He irritated me, and I recalled something that Chekhov had once said: 'If there is a shot-gun hanging on the wall then sometime it is bound to go off. Otherwise there is no point in its hanging there.' Well, after the play I went backstage and told the director what I thought about the soldier. I told him that he should either give the soldier something definite to do, or he shouldn't have him in at all, because I failed to see any symbolism in any thing so static. He agreed and I thought he was even glad to accept my idea." (From *Sovietskaya Kultura*, May, 1977.)

"There is no denying that we shall enjoy the benefits of quite impressive technological advance between 1976 and 1980. Even so I don't think that we can satisfy the challenging targets of the 10th Five-Year Plan unless everyone works with enthusiasm, inspiration and imagination... We must all readily submit our performance and production figures to impartial criticism. Everyone from worker to university professor, from artist to farmer can and must work more and more efficiently for the good of the country." (*Vetcherni Leningrad*, December, 1975.)

"...I once had to criticize a production of *The Green Bird* by Carlo Gozzi. I thought the fairy tale should have been presented in a less didactic way and should have been more light-hearted. Remem-

ber the way the Vachtangov Theatre did *Turandot?* They acted in a burlesque style, with gusto and yet conveyed the essence of the piece. A didactic approach is boring and looks like cheap propaganda. It kills the magic quality of a fairy tale, the charm and wisdom of its allegory. The message is shown too clearly, leaving no room for a different interpretation. I think this approach is wrong since the theatre should provoke the audience into reflecting on the meaning of its productions, should awaken ideas and encourage different interpretations." (*Sovietskaya Kultura,* May, 1977.)

"I've been working at the Electrosila plant for almost twenty-five years and have been my own quality inspector since 1962. I have turned large-size components and parts for many different things including the electric motors for the nuclear-powered ice-breakers *Arctica* and *Sibir.*

One day Volodya Tchupin, one of my workmates, was assigned to do a lock for the panel of an electric motor. The lad made a mistake and drilled a hole a full millimeter wider than it had to be. I met him the following Sunday when I was skiing at Sablino, our plant's holiday area. He looked very glum and didn't smile all day. In the end he apparently decided to pour out his heart to Nikolai Leshchik. Fortunately the component he had machined had not yet gone for further processing. It was taken back to the welding shop which took a whole shift to correct it. Volodya was told that his "error" was sure to have been detected later in the drilling stage or during assembly. If it had been passed then it could have been even more serious later still. I think Volodya will never forget the incident for the rest of his life. . .

A desire to maintain appearances only should not dominate in the daily relationships among the men

on the shop floor. We should all try to identify what causes deviations from approved procedures. Moreover, we must always be exacting and uncompromising to one another. On no account should we practise mutual 'amnesty' simply because we are afraid of ruining good relations." (From the journal *Kommunist,* March 1976.)

Sidorov's articles were interesting but for some reason I resisted the director's wishes, arguing that we had better interview Sidorov first. Bob-sleigh's response was predictable, "No more interviews! Didn't you yourself say so? Keep your side of the bargain."

Well, it was one up to him. Sidorov and Solipatrov were from Leningrad. So was Danilov, if his books were any guide. This might be a lucky coincidence. Off we went to Leningrad. . .

Chapter III

"THE MIKE IS ON!"

or an introduction to our participants and their private lives

It was indeed beginning to look like a tidal wave. We discovered that our studio had somehow failed to receive the narrow film we had asked for and there was no option but to use wide colour film which required a lot of cumbersome equipment and far more lighting.

Bob-sleigh began cutting out episodes which contained any hint of intimacy: "I'm not going to probe into their souls with these huge cameras," he declared. The arc-lights were so powerful that even someone like Jean Marais would have had to mobilize his considerable experience as a professional film star to retain his poise. Yet Bob-sleigh expected an ordinary factory worker to do equally well. In the middle of filming our cameraman disappeared a couple of times and we had to use his assistant. It was impossible to film at Solipatrov's factory because of the nature of the production process. Sidorov's flat was out of the question since his mother-in-law was ill. Svetlana, our pretty assistant director with blond hair and a good figure, dashed

about madly. The producer, a gloomy-looking man with a permanent frown, was the only member of the team to remain calm and unperturbed. And he had a ready-made response for any emergency. He would just say, "Fine, I'll put it on record."

We had indeed underestimated the problems of filming as much as we had underestimated our director's talents. In the midst of all this unbelievable chaos he contrived to keep things running according to plan. Wherever the set happened to be, whether in a factory, on the street or in a worker's flat, he arrived every morning as clean-shaven and dapper as ever. He went through the routine with confidence, commanding crisply: "All set? Attention please! Take one!"

This was our cue. In a quiet, relaxed voice my co-author would say to our hero: "You're probably fed up with us... What do you think of these filming sessions? They must be tiring."

Solipatrov: "Film away as much as you like. But if I were you I would pick somebody else instead of me."

"Why?"

Solipatrov: "I'm afraid you have picked the wrong man. Someone from Kiev once said he wanted to do a film about me. We had a chat, then he said that I was on the naive side and left. Then there were some people from Moscow. We chatted and they said they would go ahead with filming. They did. Only afterwards they must have been fired or something. No film was released anyway."

"Do you suffer from camera-fright?"

Solipatrov: "No, I don't think so. The camera doesn't bother me in the least. What does bother me, or rather depress me, is that I'm a slow thinker and an even slower speaker. I write badly, I know, but I'm even worse at speaking. I just feel sick

when I hear the recordings of my interviews. Those chaps from Moscow arrived and set to work with real enthusiasm but their energy waned and mine did too."

"Perhaps you're afraid of saying something wrong?"

Solipatrov: "No, I'm perfectly relaxed, because I know that if the result is good, it'll be to your credit since you're responsible for making the film interesting. On the other hand, I'm responsible for what I have to say. So if something goes wrong I'll take the rap for the rotten content and you for the rotten form."

"So why should you apologize?"

Solipatrov: "It's all right for me to hand out opinions sitting here snugly at home. I think there are far more failures in the film world than there are successes."

"What are your own views about the cinema?"

Solipatrov: "I like documentaries and photography very much. I find films interesting but am annoyed that they are a fast-moving kaleidoscope of thoughts. They're not like a photograph that you can hold in your hands and look at as long as you like, letting your thoughts wander. A photograph is static. It's a good job that film-makers are now using stills to emphasize particular points. If I were a professional film-maker I'd try to do this film as a series of shorts, perhaps about a worker, a hunter, a pilot or a prospector, etc. And throughout the film I'd emphasize the original, wise, though often seemingly paradoxical thoughts of my heroes which took shape in different situations. Then I'd be able to look back upon this film with pride. But I am afraid that only fanatics or amateur film-makers would be able to do a film like this, without having to hurry to meet deadlines."

(*The narrator:* "Anatoli Solipatrov is a first class metal worker in Leningrad's Central Research Institute of Marine Electric Equipment and Technology. He is not a party member and has never held any important posts. His education ended after the fifth form of secondary school, the last year of which he had to repeat. His schoolteacher could not have been worse, failing to see that the boy had a philosophical turn of mind. The teacher kept discouraging instead of encouraging him, with the result that the boy lost confidence in his own powers. But his confidence returned with years. He subsequently gained a reputation as a worker-sociologist and was consulted by professional writers and scholars. Solipatrov was forty-nine when we were filming. A tall man with a slight stoop and a lean face, he looks rather like a Don Quixote. He is married and has a married daughter who has finished a technical secondary school. His wife works at the same factory as him.")

"What quality do you admire most in people?"

Solipatrov: "Friendliness, goodwill. You know, an open smile and a warm handshake."

Danilov: "Their ability to work, to get things going. This is most important of all. Even if you are a nice person by nature and a good friend, but at the same time you do not know how to work, or to do things with your hands, or if you're just plain lazy, then you are worthless. This is my way of judging people."

Sidorov: "I admire hard-working people who are proud of what they do. Honesty and decency are the most important things for me."

"And what do you despise most in other people?"

Danilov: "Bootlicking, cowardice and fear to tell any boss the truth, no matter how high up he may be."

Solipatrov: "Rudeness... It always wounds me deeply no mater whether I or someone else is the victim."

Sidorov: "I hate empty phrases."

"Who influenced you most?"

Sidorov: "Evgeni Litchnov, I think. There's a picture of him in our works' museum during the three-month strike of 1912. Incidentally it was Litchnov and his friends who wheelbarrowed the works' foreign owner out of the factory and dumped him outside the gate. . ."

"And what was your father doing at the time?"

Sidorov: "Both my dad and grand-dad worked at a railway stock plant. I've had a good apprenticeship on the shop floor."

"And now you have your own school, don't you? At least that's what we've been told."

Sidorov: "School is too grand a word. It would be more accurate to say that team-leader Sidorov has his own principles. Briefly they are: to teach others to work well, to be honest and to live honestly. To me the two things mean the same thing. Take Volodya Tchupin, one of my pupils. Nowadays he says: 'There was a time when I didn't care about what my workmates did. I was too busy minding my own business. Not any more. I find it more difficult today to keep silent when I encounter people who are mean, unfair and dishonest.' "

"How did you come to be a vertical lathe operator?"

Sidorov: "Practically overnight, believe it or not. I hadn't been with the plant very long and was working on a vertical lathe. I was still serving my apprenticeship and I was lucky to have a good coach who was always ready with his advice. Then one

day I was told that I would have to man the lathe single-handed, night-shift too. I asked the foreman what I was supposed to do and he told it was a collector. . .

"A collector is a huge and expensive piece of machinery. Hundreds of people had already worked on it before me and I was supposed to add the finishing touches. If I was as much as a tenth of a millimeter out of true in my machining I would ruin the whole thing. I think it was this sense of responsibility that really made me into a turner. It took me the whole of that night-shift to do an operation that I can do inside an hour today. By morning my shirt was soaking wet although it was cold enough in the workshop.

"It takes a lot to be a turner today, including a good sixth sense and the ability to take calculated risks. . . It's a creative job.

"Sometimes it seems there's nothing new to be invented or discovered in the art of turning. But that isn't the case. You can still discover new things provided you use your head as well as your hands. Perhaps artists and actors also find that the most ingenious and interesting ideas are the simplest and most natural ones. When that happens you see familiar things in a totally new light and your discovery looks like a revelation. . ."

"You sound as if you are an art-lover!"

Sidorov: "In the evenings I like to draw or carve or fool around with my camera. I also like the theatre and I think the acquaintances I've made in the artistic community have enriched my life and made it more varied and exciting. I never miss previews of new plays and always take part in the discussions that follow. I often meet actors both when they come to our plant and at the plant's cultural

center where we have a theatre-lover's club. Quite a few of my fellow workers are members of the club. I have been a member of the arts' council of the Pushkin Academic Drama Theatre for something like eight years now. I'm not the only worker on the council. There are two others from my plant. And, you know, professional critics, actors and directors pay attention to our comments and not just out of politeness. We can tell the difference."

"You sound as if you regret still being a turner?"

Sidorov: "Not at all. I'm quite happy to be a turner because I feel it's my vocation. It was love at first sight with me and I can only fall in love once."

"Are you trying to say that it's been a fulfilment of your childhood dream?"

Sidorov: "No, not quite. When I was a boy I dreamed of becoming a cameraman..."

"Sociologists tell us that people develop hobbies to escape from their unsatisfying work."

Sidorov: "Nonsense. I simply don't believe that people's hobbies and interests outside their work spring from their dissatisfaction with their job."

"Prove it."

Sidorov: "All right. Provided, of course, that we're talking about serious hobbies and interests. I know first-class workers who love their work but who still go in for sport in a big way, write poetry, are fond of music, paint and even sculpture. Quite recently a worker, Gennadi Noskov, had an exhibition of his engravings at our plant's cultural center. I was struck by his highly professional style and his deep sensitivity. Gennadi has twice had exhibitions at the Pushkin Theatre and the response was tremendous both from the public at large and from people in the theatre world. And I don't think Gennadi is an exception..."

"Yes, but I can cite other examples of a different kind. Would you accept them as a legitimate argument?"

Sidorov: "We often talk about helping people to develop into balanced and harmonious personalities. Yet here we are saying that people's hobbies and interests spring from their disenchantment with their work. Which attitude is correct?

"I believe that it's impossible to develop a balanced and harmonious personality unless you have a personality to start with. Don't you think so?"

(*The narrator:* "Yuri Sidorov is a tall, lean, athletic-looking man of fifty. He has worked half his life as a vertical lathe operator at Leningrad's Electrosila heavy engineering plant. He has been round the world twice. The first time, as a young man, he did a round-the-world voyage on board a motor-assisted schooner. Later, as a member of the Parliamentary Committee of the USSR's Supreme Soviet, he visited many countries. He is a deputy of the Supreme Soviet from Leningrad. He has made public addresses in the Moscow Kremlin. He is married and has a son who teaches at a technical secondary school. Some of Sidorov's own water-colours are displayed in his flat. He is a confident and resolute man and has been awarded the Gold Star of a Hero of Socialist Labour.")

Sidorov: "I saw a scientist on the television talking about today's workers. It was very informative. He said that nowadays skilled workers were, on average, two years younger than they had been, while unskilled workers were considerably older. In recent years the proportion of young workers from families of office employees and intellectuals had grown by six per cent and the number of young people who considered good wages of prime importance had dwindled by three per cent. An editor of

one of the youth papers showed me the replies they got to their questionnaire. One came from Sergei Kritskin who wrote that he had once dreamed of becoming a pilot but had since changed his mind. He said now he wanted to become a turner, and not just any turner, but a first-class one.

"You asked me a minute ago whether I was sorry that I'm still a vertical lathe operator. People have asked me that before. They say, 'What new things have you seen in the last twenty-four years apart from new machine tools? Isn't it boring to spend your life doing the same thing the whole time?' They ask me that because they know that as a boy I dreamed of being a cameraman. But I have never regretted becoming a turner instead. You can't regret following your vocation."

"An artist's vocation is understandable but can a turner really have a vocation?"

Danilov: "Believe it or not, but when I was developing a taste for turning I used to go to the factory with great enthusiasm just as if I were off to a party, and I was prepared to do two shifts without a break. It was all so exciting and interesting. And I grew as attached to my teacher Pavel Shvedov as to my own father. Pavel was a master turner and when I got home I used to talk of nobody else. For several months I stopped doing sport, seeing my friends and visiting the theatre and cinema. I lived for my work and could feel myself swell with all the new knowledge I was acquiring. I was very lucky because I was then working alongside some real virtuosos, real master turners—Shvedov, Tikhomirov and others. Leningrad's best turners had been invited to work at the Electrosila plant. You can imagine how proud I was that I was one of them. I had that ecstatic feeling that I was going through a worker's university. Previously I had been wor-

ried by the thought that I had to go to college at all costs, but after a few months at the plant I abandoned the idea. I felt that I would learn more important things at the experimental plant than I would at any college. Perhaps I was wrong, but that's what I thought at the time. It was at the plant that I had my first taste of work madness... in the good sense of the term..."

"What does a turner have to do?"

Danilov: "I'm afraid I can't explain that to you because you don't know anything about my job. I'd better give you a practical demonstration."

"Even then I won't understand much... So to save time just try to explain it to me in words of one syllable..."

Danilov: "All right, I'll try. I'm not just an ordinary turner. I'm a gage-maker, get the difference?"

"Not quite!"

Danilov: "Let's put it this way. I have to machine a part made of raw-alloyed steel or some other tough material to within one-hundredth of a millimeter. So I've had to develop what we call 'a sense of the micron' which enables you to feel the differences as infinitesimal as one-thousandth of a millimeter when measuring the machined part."

"They call you a king. What does the coronation involve?"

Danilov: "Even before the revolution the most skilful and most famous turners were called 'kings.' When I was still mastering the art the kings were fifty-five–sixty years old. They would wear their Sunday best when they came to the plant, complete with top hat and walking stick, always immaculate in well-pressed suits. And the tools they made! They were masterpieces not tools! They gave me a lukewarm reception treating me with a touch of irony. And small wonder, since I was only twenty-six at

the time and to them I was just an upstart. And so one day this upstart says to his foreman that he would like to have a fling at the top grade, the king's rating! Of course they dismissed it as hare-brained confidence and impudence. But I had learned a few things by then and in 1941 when the war broke out I was allowed to join the king's league."

(*The narrator:* "Boris Danilov is the oldest of our heroes, being well over sixty. He is still working as a turner. Today, however, turning is only one of his several trades. Another is inventing. He owns quite a few inventor's certificates. Journalism is his third love. Danilov is a member of the USSR's Union of Journalists. He has plenty of charm and the smile of a roguish sage. He is soft-spoken and has a kind smile which conceals the steely character of a fighter. He champions the rights of his fellow-inventors both verbally and in print without paying attention to persons or rank and mercilessly castigates bureaucrats and conservatives. He makes his home in Moscow now where he lives with his wife and son, who has been to many countries as an interpreter. Danilov himself has been abroad but prefers to travel within the USSR. He is constantly invited to exhibit his inventions in all sorts of industrial plants in different parts of the USSR. He loves fishing.")

"Are you happy?"

Danilov: "What is happiness? I think when you feel one person needs you, it is good enough, but when you know that dozens of people need you, it makes you feel happy. Thousands of people need an inventor."

Solipatrov: "I am happy in my job and pleased with the way my life has shaped out. My only

regret is that I have but one child. I feel happiest when I am with my friends. People often complain that they don't have friends, that you can't find friends when you want them. I think one should trust other people implicitly and some of them will pay you back in kind while others will perhaps abuse your trust and exploit your good nature; once they do you will immediately see who your friends are and who are not. I think nothing is more pleasant or more precious in the world than a good mood and a selfless friend. Apart from life itself and your family, that is. That is, perhaps, why people love dogs and other pets so much, for their altruism and loyalty. Take a dog, for instance. It looks you in the eye wagging its tail happily and does not demand anything from you. . ."

"That will do!" shouted Bob-sleigh. "Let's call it a day. Switch the lights off, boys!"

The next morning it was back to the same routine.

"What would you do if you had a million roubles?" Sofia asked the participants one by one. "So you have to spend a million. How would you go about it?"

Sidorov: "A million? Well, I don't know what to say."

Danilov: "I would start a 'Danilov foundation' to help my fellow-inventors."

Solipatrov: "I would spend my million on huge containers of stainless steel which I would then fill with different things: a TV-set, a pair of slippers, a fur hat, plates, etc. You name it . . . And I would also buy letters that had been read, say a hundred letters every year. I should put the whole lot inside sealed containers and bury them either in an abandoned mine or in the depths of the Siberian forest."

"Why would you want to do that?"

"Wouldn't you like to read the diary of a Petersburg coachman, say, or that of a tailor or a fitter who lived in the last century? I think that if historians read such diaries today they'd be able to answer many important questions even though they would not enjoy reading them particularly. Such diaries and letters are priceless for the same reason that human life or the masterpieces of the old masters are priceless. I mean ordinary prosaic letters people write to one another: from country to town, from town to the Army, from a charwoman to her son engineer, from a director to his sister, a milkmaid. Some people collect coins, others postcards. I would like to collect letters, especially ones unopened by myself. I'm a contemporary and I don't want to eavesdrop through other people's keyholes. If I were to carry out my project on a really big scale I would call my collection 'A Thousand Letters from Each Year.' So if I had a million roubles to spare I would collect letters, ordinary household articles and all the other things people use daily. A million... I can't even imagine what my mother would have thought if she had been told that I was going to spend a million. Before the war our family had a pretty rough time. A bun with a bit of butter and a thin slice of sausage on top and a glass of sweetened tea were the limit of our dreams. That was a real treat which we could only get on dad's payday and on public holidays. I remember how one day I was given a sandwich with red caviar and I said 'thank you' and took a bite but then gave it back saying that it was too salty. When I told my mother about it she said I was silly to have done that but I didn't understand why..."

"Incidentally, I've been meaning to ask you about your memories of childhood."

Danilov: "I remember the terrible flood in 1924 when the Neva burst its banks. I can still see in my mind's eye all the tugboats and steamers that were toing and froing along the flooded streets picking up survivors from the water and from the roofs of their homes. They ferried them across to the other side and put them down through the second floor window ledges. It was so frightening and unusual that it could not have failed to etch itself in my memory for ever. Another memory is also associated with water. Once when we were out during the white nights two of my friends and I got into a sailing boat and secretly made for the open sea. We wanted to put ourselves to the test as most boys of our age would. Our 'voyage' lasted three weeks during which we touched land a couple of times. We fished for food which we cooked on a camp-fire. When we got back we were told off by our parents who had been half-crazed with worry because they thought we had got drowned or something..."

Sidorov: "I remember how during the war the conductor on the tram announced in Moskovski Avenue two hundred yards from the Electrosila plant gates: 'This is the end of the line, the last stop. Can't go any further, front-line's ahead...' I did some pencil drawings in those days of the siege; I still have them in my album. I did them on the back of my pre-war drawings and on magazine covers since there was no paper. My drawings and sketches of Leningrad in the terrible winter of 1941 were all my mother took with her when we were evacuated from besieged Leningrad..."

Solipatrov: "I can still see the children of beleaguered Leningrad. I was a schoolboy myself and I remember the toddlers. Can you picture a child who doesn't romp about, doesn't run, doesn't sing but who just cries soundlessly, with large tears running

down its cheeks? A child who follows with hungry eyes the spoon of someone eating next to him? Often kids like him had just a few days to live. But you never heard a single word of complaint from them, not a whimper nor a groan. You just had to reach out a bit of bread and a pair of transparent white hands would snatch it. Why? Nobody ever beat them, nobody ever shouted at them nor lectured them and their brains could hardly cope with understanding who Little Red-Riding-Hood was. True, one of my childhood friends did cry loudly once but not because he was frightened by a shell exploding or by the sight of somebody dying. This is what happened: it was dinner time at his nursery. He stood by the table silently looking with his keen eyes at the nurse who stacked the tiny pieces of bread and then took a knife and sliced a centimeter-wide strip off each slice. The idea that he and the other toddlers were going to be deprived of even that tiny bit of bread shocked him far more than a shell exploding nearby. And so he began crying in protest. He was very small at the time but he remembered that episode for the rest of his life. Whenever another of my childhood friends, Vovka Petrov, received his bread-ration he would cut it in two, put one half in a cupboard barricading its door with furniture and would eat the other. Later he would unbarricade the cupboard and eat the first half. One day he woke up in the morning and told his mother that he was going to the breadshop to get their daily ration and would trade one half for a packet of cigarettes (he was a few years my senior). Then he turned to the wall and dropped dead."

Danilov: "I remember the Leningrad of 1944 when the blockade had been lifted. I returned to my home town on crutches. I saw huge ugly sewer rats

scurrying about the streets. Our empty flat was infested with them. There was not a single cat in the city. I hobbled my way to the plant to find only women and children working there. Everybody was so happy to see me again. All the elderly specialists, including the 'kings,' had all starved to death. I described it all in my book *A Life-Long Search...* I also described how at thirty I, a king, had to uncrown myself and retrain as a fish-breeder: the doctors pronounced me an invalid unfit for factory work. I also described how I learnt to fish and how I even learnt to clean and cook my catch. That was a job like any other, of course, only my heart wasn't in it. I was so fed up that I decided to overcome my handicap and get back to my old factory job at all costs, to get back to inventing. The factory was my life. Have you read my book?"

"Yes, I have and all the other books you've written... But why should a turner or a metal worker start writing? Would it not be better to leave it to professional writers and journalists? Why do you write?"

Danilov: "You are not the only one who has asked me this. Quite recently one of our foremen asked me bluntly why I write. He said he had read my books and got the impression that I want to convert all young people to my own faith. Only he believes nothing is changing, since we are still short of workers and most young people still don't want to be machine-tool operators. So he asked me, why I write... I replied that I had got more than two hundred letters in response to my little book *Who Should Man the Lathe?* They came from schoolboys, young workers and students at trade schools. Many of them wrote gratefully: 'After reading your book I decided to become a turner.' Another wrote that he had long been wrestling with a problem and

found the answer to it in my book. When I get letters like that I feel my literary efforts, which by no means come easily to me, have been thoroughly worthwhile. That's why I continue to write."

Sidorov: "For me writing is one way of finding out what people think of my ideas and opinions. This way I can find out whether I'm alone or whether I have supporters. I always consult my fellow-workers during our factory meetings or at conferences of economic executives and managers or at the Kremlin during sessions of the Supreme Soviet. When I know that others share my opinion and support me I can maintain my point of view with greater conviction."

Solipatrov: "Of course, I'm not writing to become a professional. I'm a professional in another field, I'm a metalworker. Apparently everyone can write in one way or another. Apart from literature proper and writing for the press–dynamic compressed information which leaves something unsaid–people also write notes at leisure, setting down on paper their thoughts and reflections, notes free from the demands of an editorial board. This is perhaps what I do. Personally I think that the beauty of my notes lies not so much in their literary quality but rather in their documentary nature. People also write private letters. These, too, are documents. But unfortunately too many of them get lost. I think in order to draw the social portrait of a society one has to draw on all types of writing, literature, journalism and private letters. This is true even if a contemporary undertakes the task, let alone a future historian."

"What do you think of your own notes?"

Solipatrov: "I think they are sincere and have a serious message. If you are a serious thinker it does not mean that you can write in an interesting way

to suit every taste. I'm aware of this but I maintain that even mistaken thoughts (unless they are the ultimate in stupidity and naivety) have a right to existence. They provoke the reader to think for himself and help him gain an insight into a problem as he looks for counter arguments. I'm sure there are people who have the same obsession as I do and they form my readership. I am always glad to hear any of them if he or she has something to say. It would be a good thing to preserve such notes in the original, without any additions and corrections. I think that I myself would read my own notes with interest twenty-five years from now if I live that long. To speak nothing of my grandchildren... Won't it be interesting for them to know what sort of a man their grand-dad was and what he thought... You won't believe me, of course, and rightly so, if I say that I don't care in the least whether what I write gets published or not, or whether anyone quotes from my notes at the present time. Of course it's pleasant to realize that some of your thoughts are interesting even for people who are up to their ears in work and who know life as well if not better than you do. I don't want to occupy any rung higher on the literary ladder than the one I deserve. If as an author I have any claim to make among my contemporaries then it is that I take the role of a child who cries to make his mother take notice of him and who is always prepared to participate in the common effort."

"Is writing easy for you?"

Solipatrov: "It's hard to say. I get home and if I have a thought worth writing down I just sit down and do it. I have no basis for comparison with other people writing. It's as though I'm made up of two different people if you know what I mean. Solipatrov number one observes, always trying to see some-

thing of interest in the world around him; Solipatrov number two says: 'All right, if you find it of interest, why don't you write it down?' And I do..."

From Anatoli Solipatrov's publications

"It is a very important and subtle art to assess people's psychology, to find an approach to every individual, to ensure that pathogenic bacilli don't overcome those who take offence too readily and who may not have immunity."

* * *

"At first glance it seems that it is better to have everything presented on a plate–instructions, plans, recipes. Actually, however, the reverse is true. Take a would-be stamp-collector, give him more stamps than he knows what to do with and he will never be a real stamp-collector."

* * *

"You can't make an instrument with a sledge-hammer alone, however heavy it is. And you can't use a dozen watch-maker's hammers to replace a sledge-hammer either. You need both. A work collective can be likened to a set of different instruments and a good manager will know and understand everyone and will never try to blow a drum or beat a trumpet."

* * *

"The most profitable investment in a factory is not a new machine tool and not even a new shop but a good manager. The worker comes to the factory not only in order to 'toil' and get paid but

also in order to feel that he is doing something useful, to feel that he is important as a person and to see ways in which he can develop his potential."

* * *

"A permanently angry grimace, an imperious tone of voice and a desire to 'scare' a worker neither frighten nor discipline anyone today. All they do is to foster lickspittles. Some managers feel sure that they know everything in advance better than any worker. Of course they have their training and experience. But is that enough? Is there any point in repeating 'Hurry up, lads?' Would it not be more sensible to trust the workers more and say, 'You know more about it than I do, why don't you tell us how we should move next?' A famous traveller who knows his maps and compass, who has been in the snows of the Arctic and in the jungle will never think it detracts from his prestige if he asks a little boy standing in the courtyard where the Ivanovs live and then follows him. The boy may not know how to get to Australia but he knows his way about his own yard better than anyone!"

* * *

"The hard thing is not to do a hard job but a job that you are told to do against your will."

* * *

"It would be a good thing if everyone saw himself as a goalkeeper who is the team's last hope. If he fails to save a shot his team will be one down." (From A. Solipatrov's *Mine and Ours,* Moscow, 1973.)

Chapter IV

INTERVIEWS BEFORE THE CAMERA,

or trying to establish a general picture by examining particular incidents from the participants' lives and relations

In Leningrad you never know what clothes to wear. On a cloudless day Leningraders take umbrellas and raincoats when they go out, just to be on the safe side. In winter the piercingly cold wind which had been blowing from the Baltic Sea may have brought on a thaw by the afternoon and you feel unbearably hot in your woollens.

We were shooting our film in winter in the frost. Everything was white: the open spaces of the Field of Mars, the bridges over the canals, the Summer Gardens, the churches outlined against the trees. And amid this solemn whiteness, to the accompaniment of the chimes of the clock tower of the Petropavlovsk Fortress a huge red sun was rising over the fortress's spire like a fantastic deity. When spring came we were still not through with our filming. Our director was in a panic. To him the coming of spring spelled a minor catastrophe, for he could not see how to match the whiteness of the winter footage with the black bare trees of the

spring, how to make the people dressed in their fur hats and fur coats match up with the smiling, gay crowds dressed in raincoats and jackets. The worst of it was that his grand design was crumbling for he had dreamed of closing the film with a solemn sequence to the music of Bach. He simply could not imagine the end of his film without showing pristine ice-floes floating down the Neva River. In fact we missed the moment the river broke up and most of the ice-floes had floated downstream by the morning when we woke up to see only scattered greyish chunks of ice bobbing on the river's surface. That was hardly what our director had hoped for and was certainly not suitable background to the music of Bach.

Our director was visibly upset and declared that we would break off for a time either in the hope of the winter returning or to wait for the arrival of summer, presumably to make the contrasts look more convincing.

During the enforced intermission Solipatrov went back to wandering about the thawed city camera in hand. He was an expert photographer. To him taking pictures was not just a hobby but also a way of exploring life. I saw in his photo album any number of well-produced photographs showing his fellow-workers arguing or lost in thought, standing by their machine tools discussing, chatting during the dinner break, or out in the factory yard after work. These were the people he wrote about in his books and notes.

"I once decided to give Tolya Vereshchagin, a keen chess-player, a series of his own 'chess portraits' for his birthday. It was easy to do for the moment he settles down to a game of chess he becomes oblivious of all around and you can take as many snapshots as you like. When I finished taking

pictures of him I placed my camera on the bench and thought: 'We are not alone here, Tolya and I. Human memory isn't as reliable as a computer so it wouldn't be a bad idea for me to do a photo chronicle of our small team. The life of our team was full of events both large and small, both happy and sad. Plenty of troubles that you look back on with a smile. Plenty of annoying trifles which continue to get in your way... All this cannot fail to leave its mark.' "

Solipatrov himself "becomes oblivious of all around" when he gets carried away with his photography and so he "himself becomes a good subject for photographer." Our cameraman (who was the only one of our film crew who could not lay down his weapon during the "armistice") hoped for an interesting scene or two worth recording on film and began to follow Solipatrov as he wandered about Leningrad. And he found some material as Solipatrov photographed all sorts of street scenes that attracted his keen attention.

Yuri Sidorov also filled the "pause" by roving about the city either by car or on foot. He was in a hurry to complete some of the projects he had begun earlier and which had been interrupted by the film. Our cameraman laid in wait for him at a construction site where Sidorov came to speak to the elderly works superintendent about something or other. It was clear that for the works superintendent Sidorov was an important person–a member of the Soviet parliament who was not to be trifled with, who might at any moment phone the mayor of Leningrad or even someone higher if he found no satisfaction. Our cameraman filmed Sidorov as he arrived at the editorial offices of Leningrad's main newspaper, at government departments and as he was walking in the new university campus.

Why was he dashing about the city, he, a turner who had once dreamed of becoming a cameraman himself but who had now ended up the victim of another cameraman? Why was he, a sailor, who had circumnavigated the globe content to drop anchor by a giant lathe which was now his permanent berth? Why should he, an enthusiastic play-goer, be satisfied more often than not with witnessing dramas and comedies performed on the stage of life itself?

We asked him all these questions and this is what he replied: "As an MP I have to receive petitioners and other people who bring their problems and troubles to me. All sorts of problems, some quite prosaic, others rather unusual and even bizarre. A jilted wife, for example, pleads with me to do something to make her husband come back to the family. What can I do about a thing like that, except commiserate with her, perhaps. It was another matter when a group of students complained that their new campus provided no evening entertainment, that it did not have a single cafe or dining-room. I visited it and indeed saw that the complaint was justified. Everything was very makeshift and had been done in a hurry. I saw to it that the authorities concerned took immediate action to put things right. When I revisited the place recently I saw a great change: there was the 'Eurika' cafe, a department store, a bookshop, etc. No complaints from the students any more... The other day I reported back to my electors and they complained that people living in Kolpino in the suburbs were having a rough time because of the appalling public transport services. I contacted the organization which was in charge and received a rather strange reply. They said that because of some ridiculous regulations large capacity buses were not allowed to operate beyond the city limits. I hope that I will be able to

get this problem solved as soon as possible and I told my electors as much."

We asked him whether he thought that sometimes he occupied himself with problems that were too insignificant and minor for an MP. Sidorov replied: "No, I don't think that, for example, the last complaint was a trifle. Queueing at bus stops for hours, and then being squashed on the bus if you decide to get in is not really conducive to a good mood and can be quite a traumatic experience. And it is not just the physical fatigue but rather the moral trauma that worries me because the victims of a bad public transport service feel humiliated and insulted. And naturally such moods are transmitted to those who work alongside. If you put all these unpleasant things together and multiply them by the number of psychological stress hours you will see that this is no trifle. . ."

Sidorov certainly had a point there.

We went to the Elektrosila, Sidorov's plant, which makes six out of every ten turbines installed in Soviet power stations. Interestingly enough, the factory building was completed before the Revolution and had originally been intended for a prison. Later the Siemens-Halske Company acquired it as part of a dynamo-producing factory. Since then a good many new buildings have grown up. In Mariinskaya Street outside the main plant gate we saw a stand with a map of the world on it. From a tiny ring which represented the plant fine lines radiated out to the countries which import the plant's turbines: 78 countries all told.

We arrived in response to Sidorov's invitation to see things for ourselves.

We made a tour of the plant and saw the clockwork precision with which every worker performed

his particular operations. Then we went to Sidorov's own part of the shop to see what his team was like. There were three experienced and three younger members in his team headed by a "professor"–Sidorov himself. It looked as if there was indeed a Sidorov school at the Elektrosila plant. You will perhaps remember that when I asked him about it during one of the preliminary interviews, Sidorov corrected me saying that "school" was perhaps too big a word. We spent several days at the plant looking at things unobtrusively so as not to get in the way. And we discovered that Sidorov school was not only a school of technical mastery but also one of human communication and moral principles. Quality of production and quality of performance are derived from the qualities of the human personality. They have abandoned all compromises and "mutual amnesty" as Sidorov himself likes to put it. Their motto is "if you want to be on top of your job start by being a person." Incidentally, Sidorov's men believe that high standards and friendship can go together quite well. It is even better that way, they claim, because you are relaxed, confident and dignified. They like to do things together, to be together even after the day's work. They go out hiking in summer, skiing in winter and also on fishing trips in the country. These joint activities are a tradition of long standing with them.

Our director regained his enthusiasm and was his energetic and bustling self again. He must have recovered from his disappointment at the sudden thaw.

We set up our cameras in the assemblying shop of the Sverdlov Machine-Tool Firm. Our audience on that occasion were assemblymen who were free. Georgi Kulagin addressed them and said: "I would like to introduce to you men who write articles and

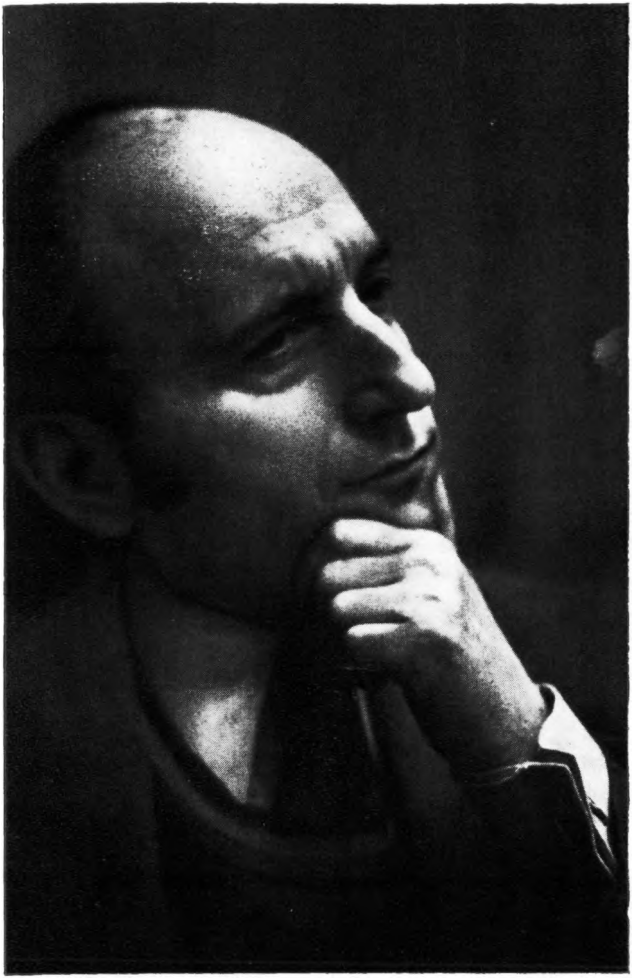
books but who earn their livelihood by operating lathes."

While Kulagin was introducing Yuri Sidorov, Boris Danilov and Anatoli Solipatrov to their fellow-workers we would like to introduce the man himself to you.

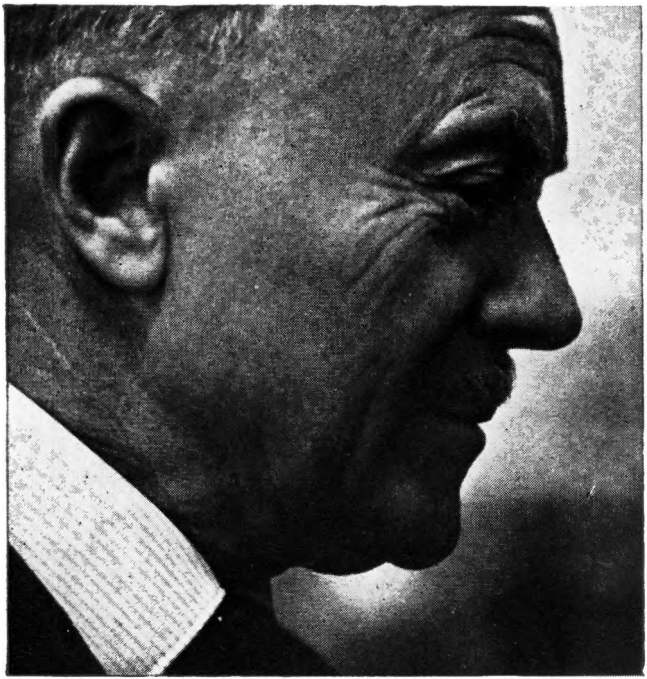
From Georgi Kulagin's publications

"March 23, 1942. A hungry man looks strange on a cold, frosty day. His cheeks are as white as snow or as grey as sulphur and his lips are a strange-looking unhealthy colour like an open wound... It is freezing hard and the abandoned trams are frozen solid to the ground. A hushed stillness reigns over the wide deserted street. An occasional improvised iron stove emits a stream of smoke through a small opening. Neither a sparrow nor a cat, nor a dog are to be seen in the street... Emaciated, ghastly-looking people drag sledges along with corpses on them."

"March 25, 1942. I noticed that the hunger is having a different effect on young women and girls than on men. Their faces are not swollen and their features are not distorted. They don't look as ugly as we men do. Their complexion does not acquire that earthy shade of grey and their heads do not look like bare skulls covered tightly with parchment. It seems nature is playing a cruel joke by making young women and girls retain their attractiveness to the end. But of course starvation is having its murderous effect on them too. They are wasting away visibly and their cheeks are taking on a dull, bluish whiteness... Yes, the girls are melting away like lumps of sugar in water. When I look at them



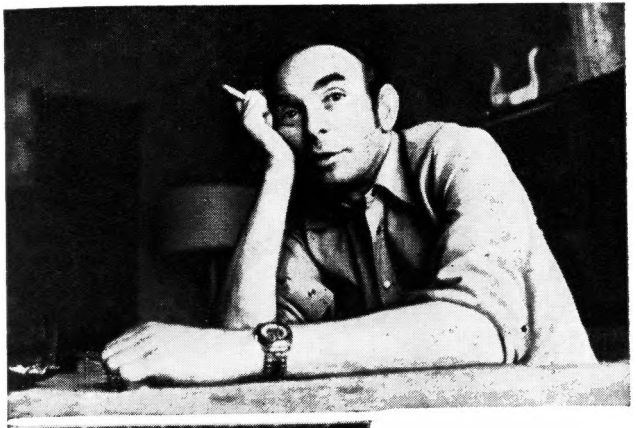
ALEXANDER LEVIKOV

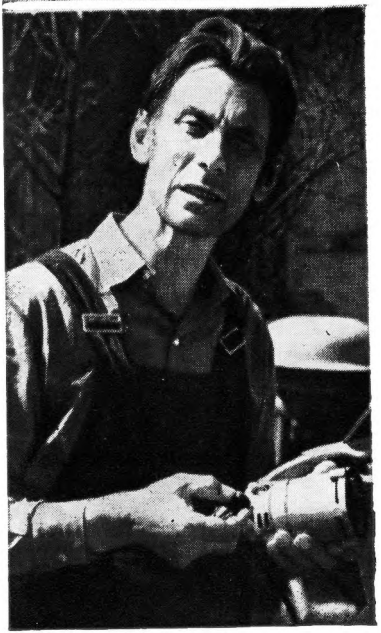


BORIS DANILOV

"What do you like in people most of all?"

"Their ability to work, to get things going. This is most important of all. Even if you are a nice person by nature and a good friend, but at the same time you don't know how to work or how to do things with your hands, or if you're just plain lazy, then you are worthless. This is my way of judging people."





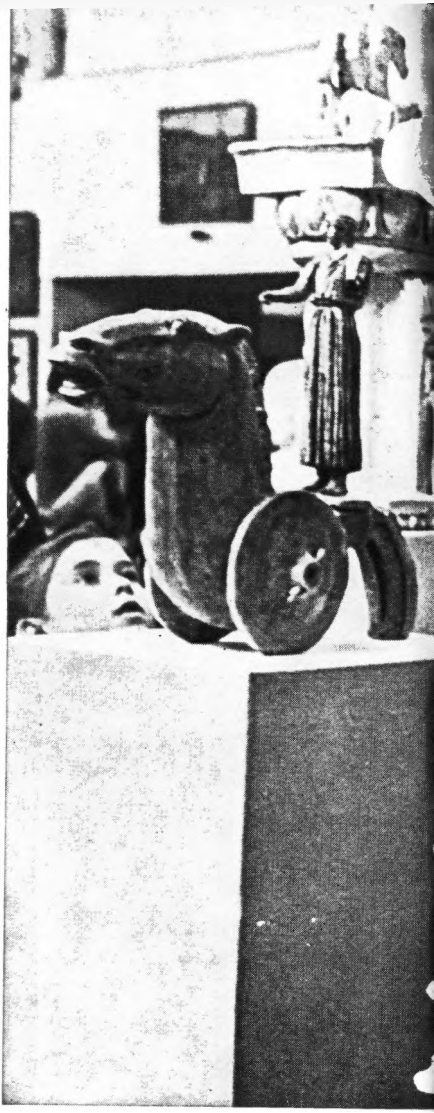
YURI SIDOROV

'If we are talking about working people, then what I admire about them is their love of work, the pride they take in their labour. I think that honesty and decency should be put above all other human qualities."

ANATOLI SOLIPATROV

"An openhearted, friendly smile and a hand outstretched in greeting."

"Creative work is the best jolt to put anyone on the right path. . ."

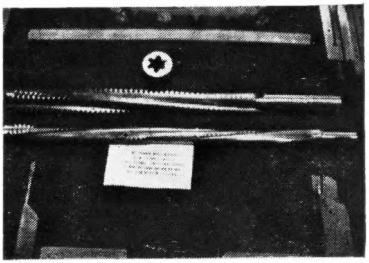


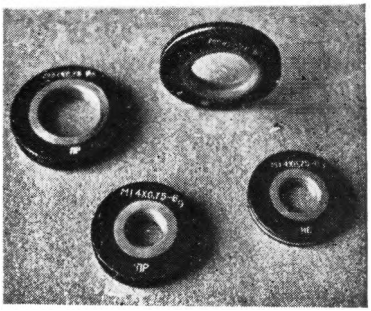
At an art exhibition.

Discussing a new invention.

"Are you happy?"

"To be happy is to be needed and appreciated. It's very good, of course, if one person needs you, and if ten or twenty people need you, this is enough to make you happy. But an inventor is someone that thousands of people need and appreciate."



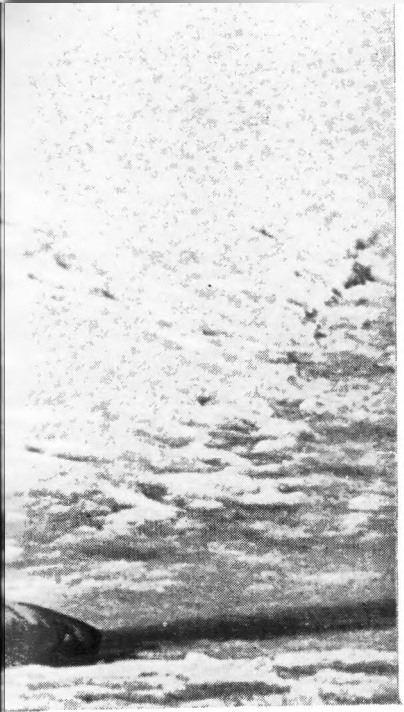


Some of the products of Boris Danilov's inventive mind.

Ceramet hole gages.

A broaching lathe for speed thread cutting.

Ceramet gages to control thread cutting.



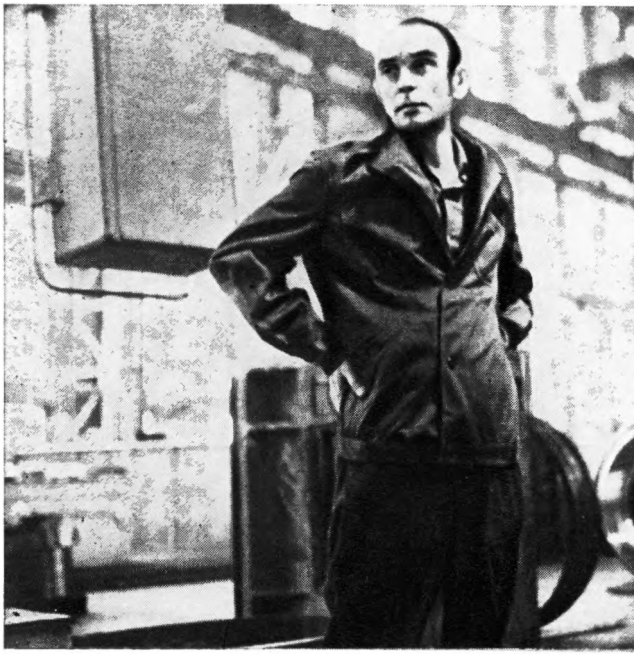
Boris Danilov is a master angler.

At the Polytechnical Museum.

At home with son Valery.

"Without enthusiasm and inspiration one cannot accomplish the complex tasks of the tenth five-year plan... We must review the results of our work with a critical eye, and each of us, from worker to professor, from artist to farmer, can and must create more material and cultural wealth."

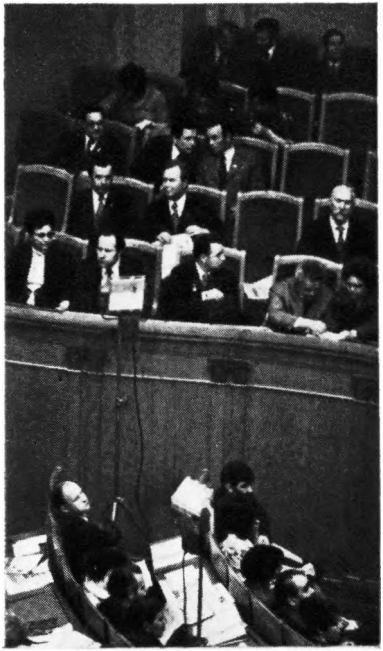
Yuri Sidorov has lived in Leningrad all his life. On his way to work every morning he walks across Palace Square, in the heart of the city.



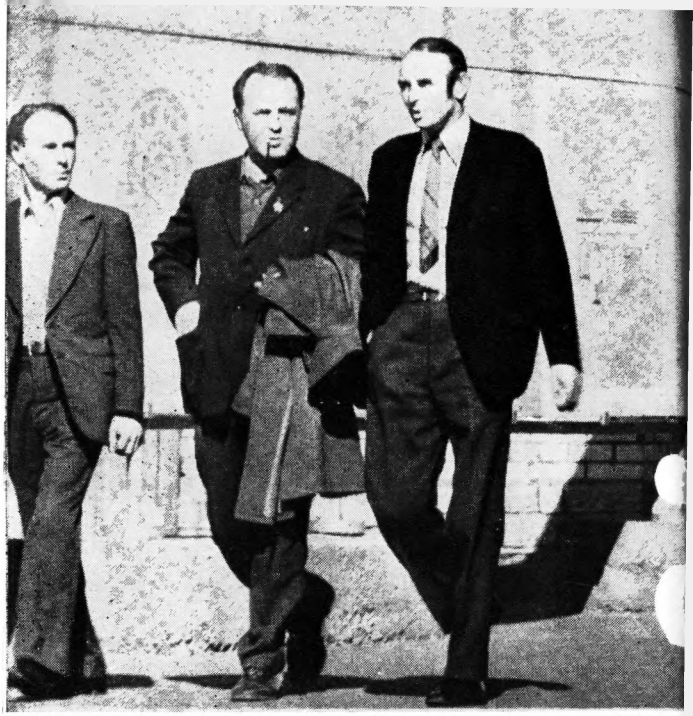
For Yuri Sidorov the factory is another home. . .

Teacher and pupil.

At a session of the Leningrad City Council.



At a session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Yuri Sidorov is speaking to Cosmonaut Georgi Beregovoi and other Soviet MPs.



The shift is over.

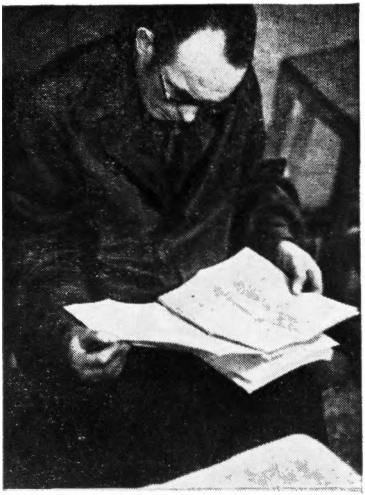
Yuri Sidorov at a textile mill in Yugoslavia.

Yuri Sidorov and a group of Soviet MPs in Stambul.

A photograph of Yuri Sidorov and Senator Edward Kennedy autographed by the latter.

In his study at home.

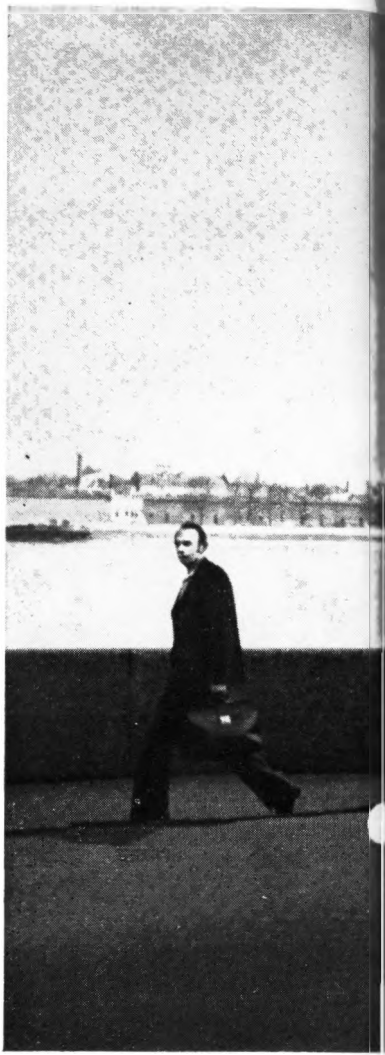
"The more informal our daily contacts at work are, the better it is for everybody. This must be the norm of our life. On the other hand, we must be very demanding of one another: there must be no room for permissiveness which is no substitute for true friendship."



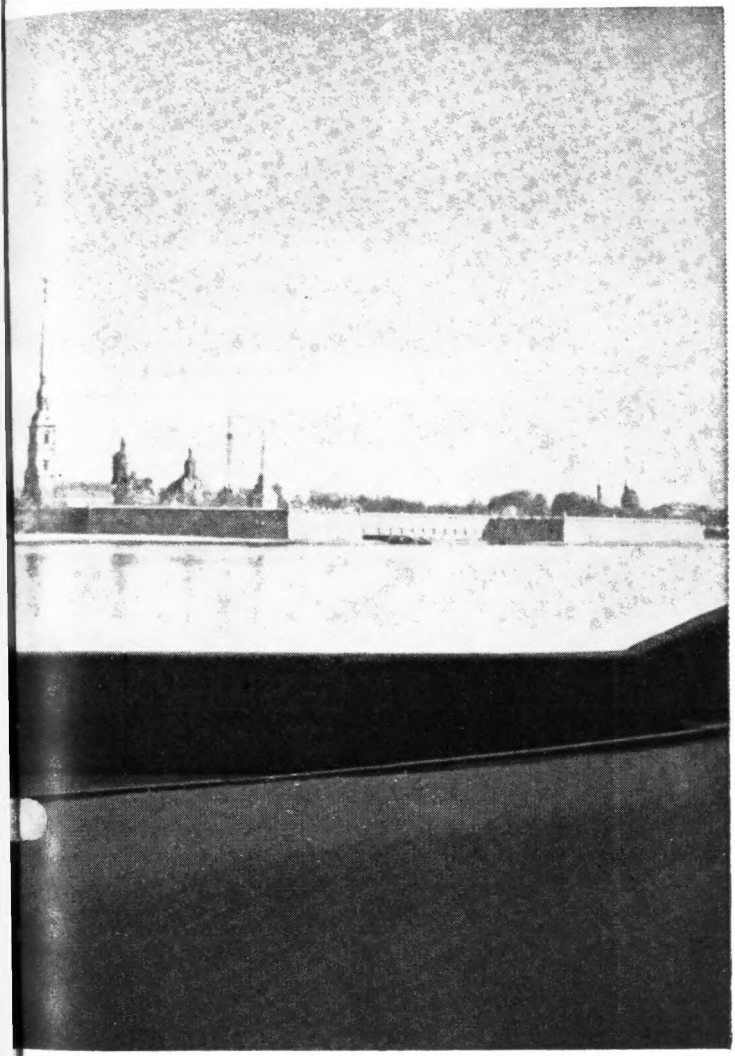
Reading letters during the lunch hour. As a deputy, inventor and journalist, he receives post from all over the USSR.

Wood carving is Yuri Sidorov's hobby.

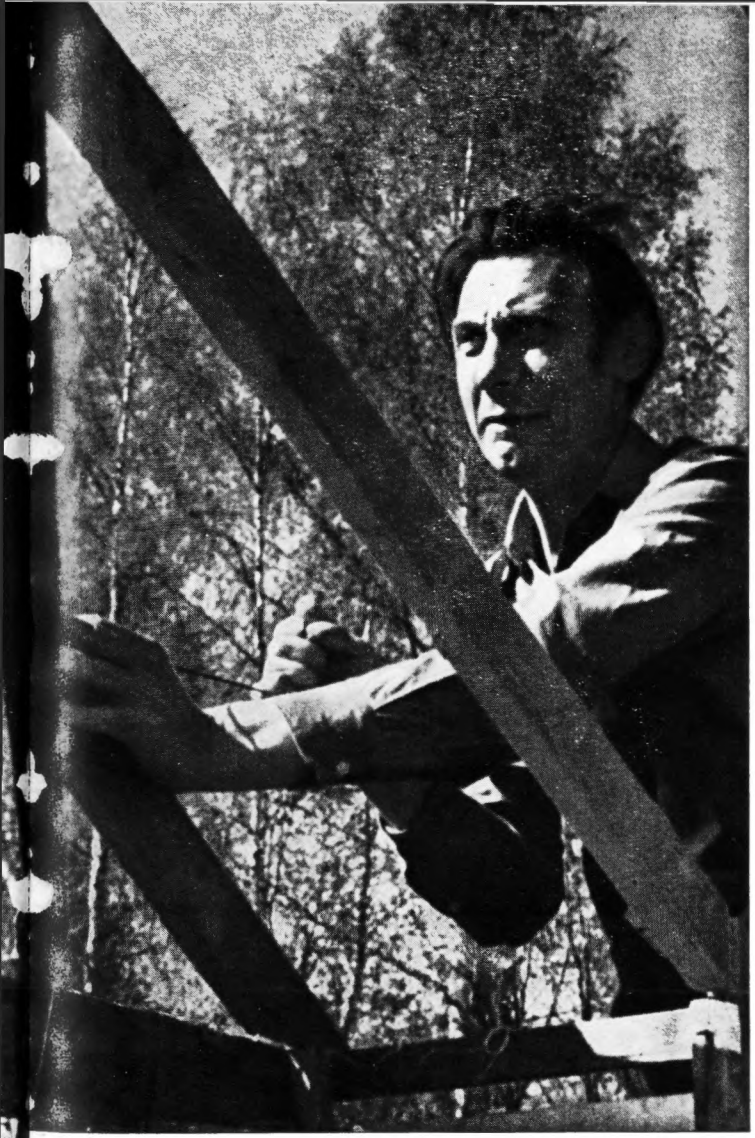
"It looks as if nothing new could possibly be invented in the business of lathe operating. This is not so, for if you use your brain, and not just your hands, you can invent a good deal more. I think it must be the same in the arts and the theatre: the best ideas are always the simplest. Sometimes your invention seems to be a revelation..."

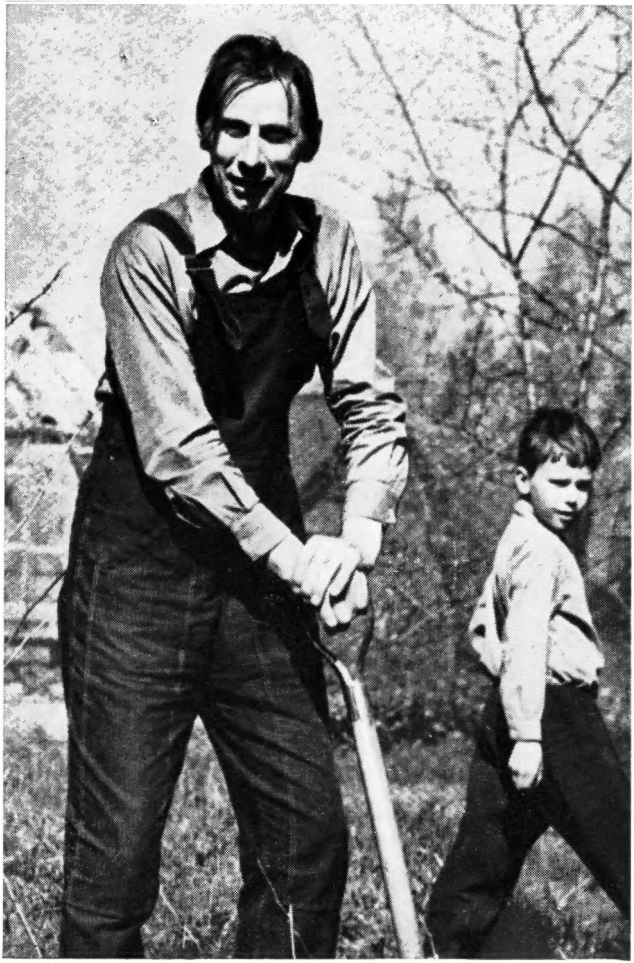


In the evening he returns home by way of the Neva River embankment.

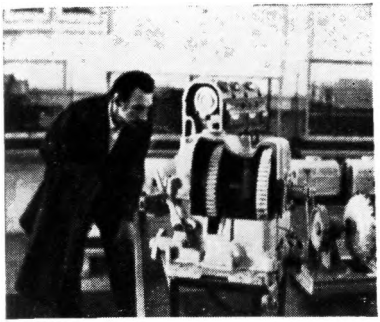


Anatoli Solipatrov: "My friends say I put too much faith in psychology. It's true that psychology is a weakness of mine. I view it as a medicine, knowing very well that no medicine should be taken in too large a dose. But today, when there are enough specialists in all fields of human activity, the importance of psychology as a science has grown immensely."



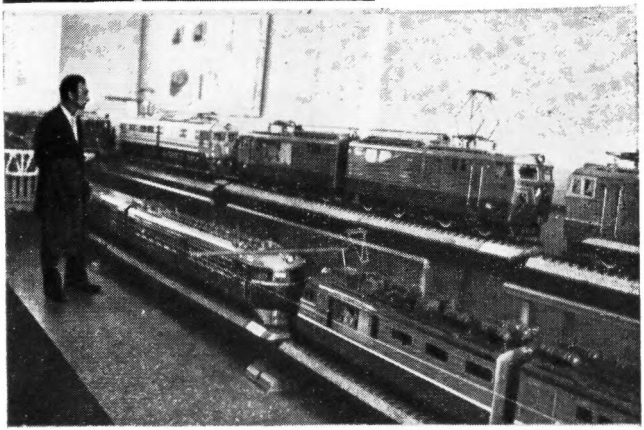


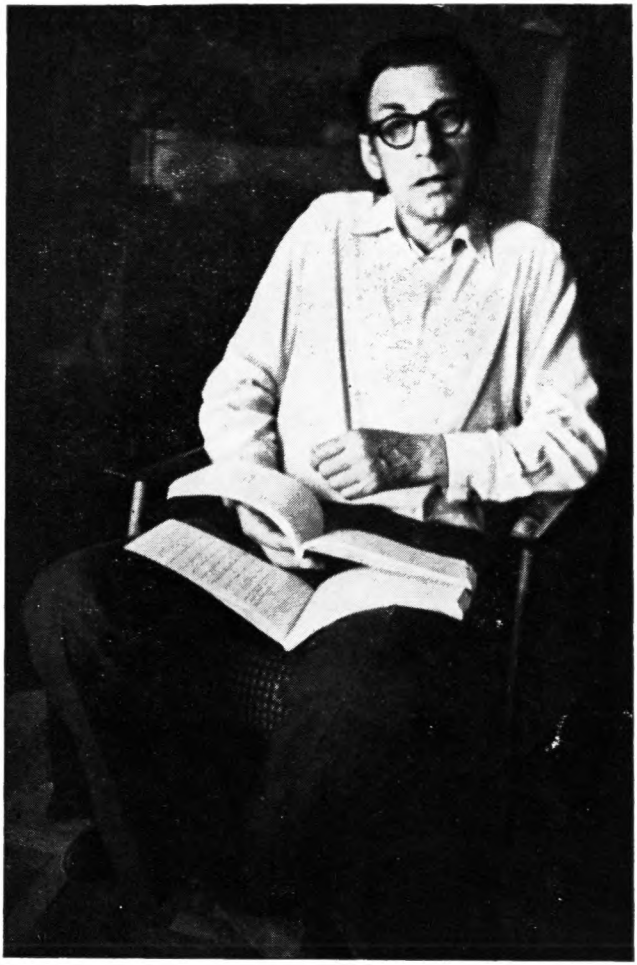
He loves pottering in his garden, planting flowers and tending trees. He has even built a country home for his family.



His true calling lies with machines.

At the Leningrad museum of railway transport.





"Are you happy?"

"I am pleased with both my life and my trade. What I regret, though, is that I have only one child. I have been lucky with friends. I often hear people complain: "I have no friends, where can I find them?! I think that a person must be trusted implicitly, and he will repay your friendship in full. But if he tries to take advantage of you and play on your credulity, you will see right away what kind of person he really is. I think that there is nothing more precious in the world than a trusty friend and high spirits. And that, of course, is not counting life itself and your family..."

Postscript

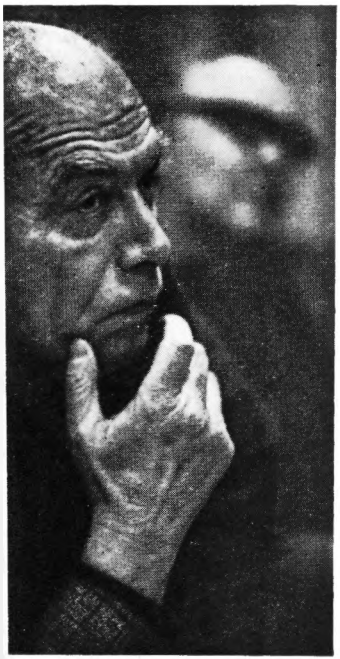
SCREENING ROOM,

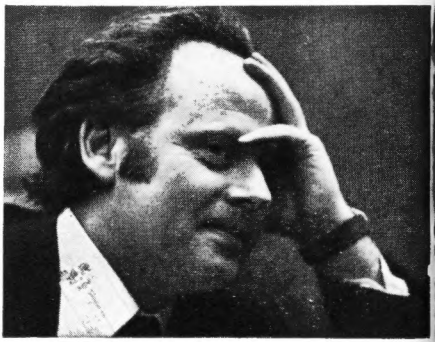
or what the viewer has said when it is too late for the film's scriptwriters to say anything.

The first TV showing,
Reviews in the press,
Discussions at the Central House of Journalists are now all in the past.

Discussing the film "I Want to Tell You" at the Central House of Journalists in Moscow.

Alexander Levikov. ▶





Scenarist Alexander Wolfson.

Journalist Yuri Sokolov.

Scenarist Leonid Braslavsky.

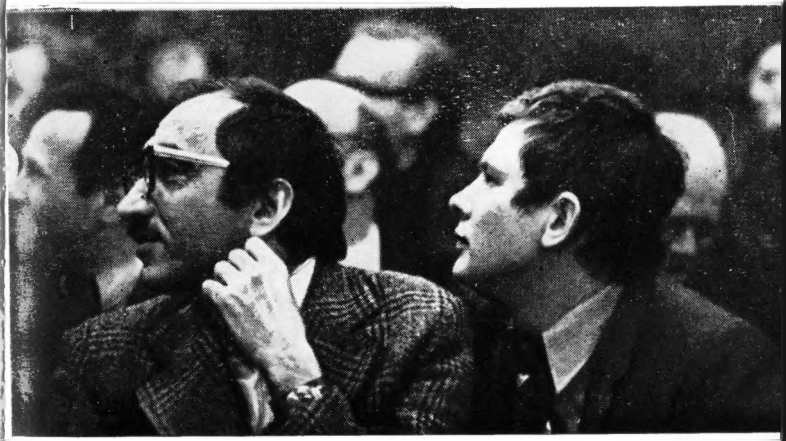
Lathe operator Boris Danilov.

Dmitri Mikhailichenko, metal-cutting machine operator at the Likhachev automobile manufacturing plant.

Metalworker
Kim Andreyev.

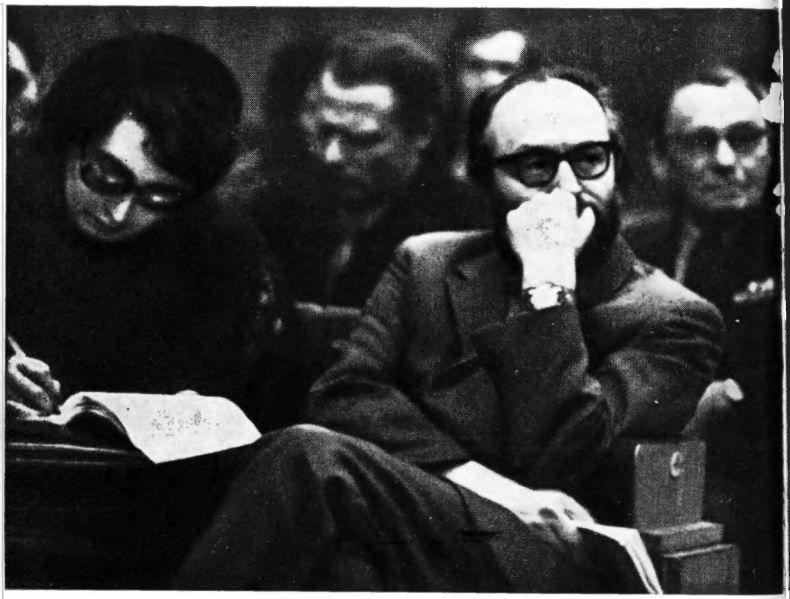
Nikolai Yurchikhin is responsible for the good repair of every bus in the depot.

Arkadi Udaltsov, deputy chief editor of "Literaturnaya Gazeta" (right) and Yervant Grigoriants, one of the newspaper's correspondents.



Rostislav Andreyev
writes for television.

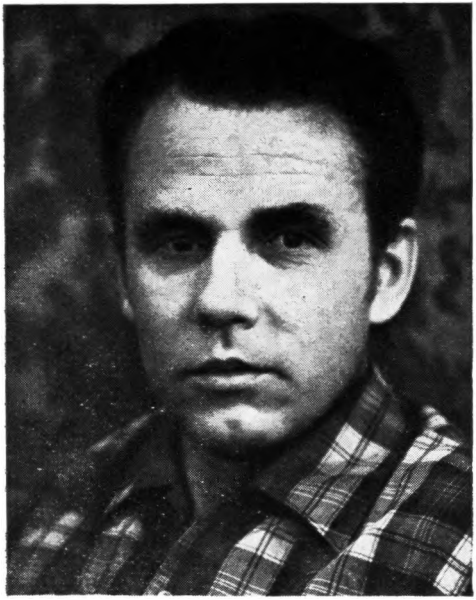
Writer Boris Kamov.



Larissa Kuznetsova, a current affairs writer.

Semyon Gurevitch, Merited Teacher of the Russian Federation.

Scientist Georgi Kulagin.



KIM ANDREYEV [remember that worker whom we wanted to play a part in the film, but who was turned down by the film director!] wrote in the newspaper "Sovetskaya Kultura": "I have talked to workers in almost all sections of our plant. They liked the film. They said it is thought-provoking and very true to life. . ."

an agonizing feeling of pity and frustration pierces my heart."

(From *A Diary of the Blockade* by G. Kulagin, *Nash Sovremennik* magazine, Moscow, 1977, No. 4.)

* * *

"When traveling down the Volga I, like many of my countrymen before me, never stopped admiring the tremendous creative power of my homeland's working class. I saw the evidence of the Herculian effort made by thousands of concrete layers and other building workers when building the dams of hydroelectric power stations on the Volga. Our steamship sailed under the graceful girders of bridges and under the looping cables of power-transmission lines set up across the great river by spidermen and welders..."

"...We cannot allow the situation to continue where schoolteachers keep dinning into their pupils: 'If you don't study hard you will be nothing but ordinary workers.' It is wrong for parents, by using any means they can, to push their children leaving 8-year schools into going on to complete 10-year schooling and later on, to college. It is wrong to talk schoolchildren out of enrolling into trade schools. It is an intolerable situation when, because a few professions monopolize the right to creative work, young people shun manual work... I think that the vertical lathe operator who machined the working wheels of the hydroturbines for the Bratsk, Krasnoyarsk and Aswan power stations is on any count as much of a creative worker as the architects and design engineers..."

"...I think it is high time to give thought to introducing special titles and decorations for especially gifted industrial workers who have attained

the heights of their particular trade after years of imaginative, creative work on the shop floor. Why should a turner or a welder on top of his job not deserve the title of a merited turner or a people's turner or welder. Why should we not create something like a 'Worker's Academy' or an 'Academy of Labour' which would be on a par with, say, the Academy of Medical Science? Membership of such an academy would be the mark of the highest distinction for a deserving industrial worker and would stimulate him to make even stiffer demands on his own skill, education and creative ability for the common effort." (From G. Kulagin's *Worker-Manager-Scientist,* Moscow, 1976.)

"I am not advocating an autonomy but I believe factories and plants must have clearly defined and absolutely firm rights which would enable them to rely on their own forces rather than having to depend on the mercy or outside aid. It is high time to increase significantly the measure of independence for industrial enterprises... Power and responsibility must finally be balanced, without which efficient management is impossible. It, say, a ministerial department has extensive powers to tell me, a factory manager, what I should do, then this department should bear an equal measure of responsibility for what happens. If, say, I am told by this department to conclude a particular contract which I feel would not be good for my factory then this is a clear case of a ministerial department usurping the rights of my factory and if this happens, as often does, disastrous results follow... It is an open secret that, in most cases, our ministries waste time, effort and money collecting information that nobody needs, and moreover, that they waste the time and manpower of factories and plants and keep their management on their toes quite unnecessarily. If I

were to draw an analogy, albeit a nominal one, I would say that ministries must play the role of something like the general meeting of shareholders, of a supervisory council, if you like, but they should never do the job of the board of directors." (From G. Kulagin's "Power and Responsibility," *Echo* magazine, Novosibirsk, 1975.)

Kulagin: "What do you think of the problems Sidorov, Solipatrov and Danilov raise in their articles? For instance, the problem of a shortage of manpower at factories and plants. You can see any number of adds for turners, metalworkers, electricians, welders, etc. and it is a fact that young people are not in a hurry to respond to these appeals."

Geraskov, an electrician: "I think this results from our education system, from the way we bring up our children. I was once in Sweden to provide after sale service and maintenance for the machine tools purchased by a Swedish company. One day a cleaning woman came in, a young good-looking girl with secondary education and knowledge of two foreign languages. And what a good job of cleaning she did! Apparently she did not think it beneath her dignity to wash floors. Just try and find a girl at our factory who would enjoy washing the floors as much as I think that Swedish girl did. And, not surprisingly, you won't because everyone keeps telling her that if she fails to do well at school she will be washing floors for the rest of her life."

Roshchin, senior, a worker: "I think we parents are to blame. We pamper them too much. We tend to wet-nurse them, urge them not to work in a factory because it means nothing but dirt and hard work. Instead, we encourage them to look for light work, a soft job where they will be sitting pretty

doing nothing, looking beautiful and getting paid for it."

Ryabich, a worker: "My daughter is now going through her practical course prior to her graduation thesis. She is in the last year of a physics and maths technical school. She has already been offered a job... And you know what she told me, she said she is not going to work in an office. Says she would like to work in the shop where I assemble my machines. She is 19 and if I know anything about her, she will keep her word. A daughter like that does her father proud. And if she plans to go on to further education she is welcome to enroll at an evening college. I also have a son who has just turned 14. He is very keen on sports, judo is his favourite. He is placed second in his weight class here in Leningrad. But I am afraid I would never encourage him to be a turner. To tell you frankly, I have been a turner myself for 15 years and I know what it means."

Danilov: "And why not? Turning is a good job. In heavy engineering the machine tool is the beginning of everything. I have been a turner for 40 years and even doctors of science and important managers are not above lending me an ear if I have something worthwhile to say..."

Kulagin: "Yes, but you work in the tool-making shop where the atmosphere is more stimulating than in other shops and then you are not just a turner but a gage-maker. Ryabich is right that in serial production machine-tool operators are really hard-pressed by their stiff output quotas. I know a turner in Leningrad who complains that he feels chained to his machine tool. He is on piece rate and he can't leave his machine tool for a moment because if he does he will fail to fulfill his output quota for the day. No joy in that. But I would like to come back

to something else. I don't understand why so many young men work themselves to death trying to get into colleges and universities. I am now working at a college and I would not say that all the students there have the makings of real intellectuals with university degrees. . ."

(*The narrator:* "Georgi Kulagin is a well-known economic executive, manager, scientist and writer on topical affairs. His wealth of experience, intelligence, erudition and bold, independent judgements have earned him popularity not only in managerial circles but also in the literary community. He contributes to many economic journals and to publications put out by the Writers' Union. During the last war, he was in besieged Leningrad where he ran the city's Metal Works. He kept a diary in which he recorded the tragic events of those grim days. He published his diary 30 years later. After the war, he worked as an economic expert in different countries of Western Europe reporting to the Soviet foreign minister on a number of important questions. Until recently, he had been the general manager of Leningrad's Sverdlov machine-tool firm, a post he held for ten years. Long before he left the post he announced that he would resign at 60. He explained that he did not think that the manager of a firm as big as the one he headed at the time should be older than 60. Well, he was as good as his word, he resigned and moved to Leningrad's Institute of Finance and Economics to work as an ordinary research associate. He is still enjoying the full confidence and respect of the workers of the firm he left. We asked him to conduct the meeting in the assembly shop.")

Kulagin: ". . .And even those who do manage to graduate prefer to work at research and design in-

stitutes. They are not keen on working in industry at the factory."

Sidorov: "I think we should change the selection procedure for those who should go on to college and those who should not. I suggest that we should adopt this procedure: A young man should do a couple of years in college and then his academic progress will be carefully assessed to see if something good will come out of him upon graduation. In case of doubt, I think we should give him a pause for a year and send him to take a practical course at a factory. His performance at the factory should then be carefully examined to decide whether the young man should be allowed to resume his college studies or not. Everything will depend on his performance on the job. Let's face it, that would be a better arrangement than having him regret his mistaken decision to go to college where he simply gets in the other students' way. Why don't we put it like this: Our college education is free. The country has wasted two years and a lot of money on you, and if you don't do well then you'd best pack your bags. If we adopt this arrangement then I am sure that those who have got themselves accepted by colleges and universities and who should never have been in the first place, will all drop out by the third year."

Solipatrov: "Yes, young men are not particularly keen on working in industry. I think this is the result of the massive propaganda onslaught they suffer everyday from all sides. Their parents keep scaring them: 'If you don't do well at school you'll be chained to the factory floor for the rest of your life . . .' When the parents say that they don't really have much hope that their warning has got through and, to make doubly sure, they back it up with appeals to authority, by using their connections, money, tears, by promises of motor-cycles, tape-record-

ers, jeans, etc. School egoistically and mercilessly swallows up several years and gives our children a secondary education and not much else. And what does the public do? All you hear is the same string of questions: 'And where are you studying?', 'What college are you at?', 'What university?' People rarely, if ever, ask young men, what factory they work at. Some people say that the problem of the next generation of workers, of who will replace the present work force, will resolve itself unaided. Hopes are pinned on increasing automation in production—fewer people will be needed to run industry, they say. I think it's wrong for us to pin our hopes on automation. Automation will sharply increase demand for skilled workers who will have to make, set up and maintain all those automated assembly lines. I think the whole problem lies not in how to enhance the prestige of industrial trades but rather how to persuade the adults who are working in this field and are its guiding force to turn the helm and change course."

Danilov: "I was once at a plenary session of the Writers' Union. I like the way the poet Lev Oshanin summed this up. He admits that young men are shying away from work in industry. But the reason, he says, is that for 40 years our Soviet literature has kept telling the younger generation that one should go to college and university to become engineers, pilots, cosmonauts, that only people in these glamorous professions have a fulfilling and interesting life, and that only someone like the head of a design office gets involved in exciting and thrilling adventures. I think Oshanin is right. Indeed, if workers ever become the heroes of books written by Soviet writers then, in most cases, they are either plumbers or turners presented in an unattractive light, covered in dust with their faces and hands

smeared in lubricating oil. You can't attract young men to industry by portraying those who keep it going like that. Oshanin says that our writers know little or nothing about the daily life of modern factories. He admits that it is difficult now to swing public opinion round and to change a stereotype that has been fostered for decades but it has to be changed. Something is being done along these lines today. Interesting books and plays are now produced portraying boring-machine operators and other industrial workers as people essential for the country's industrial might who are fully-fledged members of the main stream of our Soviet reality and who lead interesting and fulfilling lives."

Tyapkov, a metalworker: "Today's metalworker is not what he used to be. Now he is a man with a secondary general or technical education. Most metalworkers have secondary education. But the trouble is that people who are far removed from the world of industry, who know nothing about it, keep dinning into their children the idea that industrial trades have a low prestige value. And of course it discourages young men. Prestige? Nonsense! This is nothing but idle talk of Philistines that is spread by word of mouth from one Philistine to another. They have never seen a good factory in their lives and have no idea what it is like. We should do more to promote and popularize industrial trades to enhance their attractiveness in the eyes of the younger generation. As it is, little or nothing is being done about it. We do get an occasional visit from a group of schoolchildren led by their teacher. And all they do is take a walk around the factory to satisfy their idle curiosity."

. . . Long before this round-table discussion when we were thinking about the best way to write the script someone suggested interviewing little children

in a nursery to ask them what they would like to be. Of course, no one seriously hoped to get reliable information on "early vocational orientation." It was quite possible that toddlers of five to six years would say they would like to be magicians. But what if we conducted a series of interviews with members of different age groups in an ascending order starting with toddlers, moving on to first-formers and then up the school to school-leavers? The director liked the idea. So we went to a nursery for our first round of interviews. The little ones were at play when we arrived and we asked the nurses, who were looking after them, to break off for a few minutes. The first interviews began. Here is a sample of the replies we got: "I want to be a sailor," "I would like to be a doctor," "I want to be a pilot," "a builder," "an animal trainer," "an engine driver," "a motor-cyclist," "a cartoonist."

Then we went to school, where we interviewed 11 to 12-year olds and got these replies: "I would like to be a doctor because everybody respects a doctor." "And I want to be a forester because I love nature," "I would like to be a cybernetics expert," "I would like to be an ichthyologist. . ."

The older children, 17-year olds who would be leaving school the following year, gave these replies: "A radio engineer," "a librarian," "a biologist," "a cutter," etc.

Would there be anyone who would like to be a factory worker? Our camera slowly panned round the classroom, filming stylish hair-does, shifting feet, defiant or downcast eyes and general silence. . .

Here is a look at the same problem, but from another angle. Here is what industrial workers themselves have to say on the subject. We go back to our round-table discussion.

Solipatrov: "A young man joins the factory. What sort of reception does he get? Is his arrival expected and welcomed? He has no idea of basic things like output quotas, conduct on the shop floor, etc. And what he sees in his first months at the factory will be his idea of the standards and norms of factory life for years afterwards until he adjusts his ideas himself in one way or another."

Zavitov, a metalworker: "It sometimes happens that a newcomer to the shop gets pushed from pillar to post, they make him run errands for others. Nobody likes that. So the newcomer leaves."

Tyapkov, a metalworker: "I believe a young man has to keep looking for his place in life until he finds it. You can't find without seeking. You have to see things, go places, in short, get experience. It often happens, however, that a young man acquires a particular speciality but ends up doing something quite different. I've heard of a musician who ended up as a surgeon. He was once in an accident and his life was saved by a surgeon. That made a strong impression on him and he abandoned his violin and entered a medical college to learn the surgeon's art. Or another case, a student studied at a physical culture college and then his father was killed by a bunch of drunken hooligans. After that he decided to leave his college and joined the militia to combat crime. Or another case... A teacher, say..."

A voice from the audience: "There aren't any ruffians at this factory... Come to the point!"

Tyapkov: "Wait a second, you've interrupted me. I mean that if a man is looking for something and then encounters something else, his final choice does not always match up with his original intention. This is what happens to some young men who come to our factory after leaving trade schools. A young man says: 'I want to be a milling or lathe operator.' He

wants to be one before he understands what it means. Sometimes he is disappointed. We should arrange things differently. When a young man like that comes to the personnel department it is not enough for us to send him straight to a lathe. We'll have to be better psychologists and teachers if we are to develop their talents, potential, and interests. I think we should encourage young men to try different jobs before making their choice. Then some people like to see the results of their work straight away and I think we should enable such people to see tangible evidence of what they do. There are others who are not in a hurry, say, someone who is quite happy to spend hours machining off a micron-thick shaving. Not everyone can have this kind of patience. You need the right kind of mentality for the job. In short, we have to help young men to find their right place at the factory."

. . . Let us drop the subject for a while.

We are at an evening party in a secondary school. The band is playing away full blast and the seventeen-year olds on the dance floor are dancing for all their worth. Standing in the corner we see a familiar figure, a tall erect man. Yuri Sidorov, a worker and an MP. He often comes to this school to talk with the older pupils. Earlier in the evening we heard him address them and answer their questions. There was a ripple of applause when he invited them to come to his Electrosila plant to work after leaving school. Now at the height of the dance he is looking at the boys and girls on the floor and is probably wondering whether they have really responded to his invitation. He does not expect them to come rushing to his plant just like that. He knows that he will have to do more work on them before they do. . . There will be more dances at the school before the farewell ball marking the end of the school

years. Where will the boys and girls go then? Two powerful magnets, two opposing poles attract young people in this country. The newspapers are full of invitations to enroll at colleges and universities. The notice-boards in the streets and outside factory gates are plastered thick with adds for industrial jobs of every description. These are the two poles, the two magnets–the two scales of the social balance. They symbolize a serious problem facing the Soviet state and society today. Scientists, scholars, journalists, ordinary workers and government ministries, MPs and factory managers are all thinking of ways of solving the problem. The problem can be solved.

Imagine a large room containing a row of machine tools and next to it a lecturer's rostrum. Boys of fifteen dressed in dark overalls are listening to Danilov telling them the story of his life and work. He is full of praise for their trade school but adds that he has seen ones which are better equipped. They are very hard to enter, the competition being as stiff as eight applicants per place. English, French and German are taught and each student is involved in some kind of innovating activity. When Boris Danilov began to give a practical demonstration of his skill, showing the boys new instruments and work techniques, we mentally compared this scene with what we had seen at the school's party where Yuri Sidorov was the guest. The boys were almost the same age in both cases, but what a difference between them! These boys have already made their choice.

Kulagin: "Boris Danilov takes the view that if we are to enhance the prestige of industrial trades we must do something to involve workers in creative activities such as innovating and inventing."

Tyapkov, a metalworker: "It's all very well when they write about involving a worker in rationalizing

so that he will start putting his heart into his job. But I think that we have to move to it from the opposite direction. It is a truism that lack of skill kills off all desire to work. First of all we have to train a young man to work well, help him see the results of his work and only then should we involve him in rationalizing."

Sidorov: "People often say in this country that the worker is the master of production, the master of his own factory. But Lenin once said that a conscientious worker should feel himself not only master of his own plant but also a representative of his country and that he should have a sense of responsibility."

Solipatrov: "How does one instill this sense of responsibility? It is not enough to tell the workers that they are the masters. A master is someone whose opinion is taken into account, someone who participates not only in production but also in running of his factory. At factories where this is the case workers do feel themselves to be masters."

Danilov: "It is a very hard thing to acquire, this sense of being a master. Not everyone can or will develop it."

Solipatrov: "This feeling comes to you when you of your own free will undertake the hardest job, the most challenging task, and when nobody prevents you from doing so. Or if they do you can eventually overcome this opposition. Everyone has his own 'cruising speed' in life and if someone starts breathing down your neck and urging you to rush on you can hardly develop this feeling of being master of the situation. I think it is senseless to rush people. It is equally wrong to hold them back, for if you do they may think that someone is deliberately trying to keep them down and that their efforts are not appreciated and not needed by anyone. When

people feel that, there can be no question of their seeing themselves as masters."

Sidorov: "Sometime ago one of our workers was walking in a street when he saw something that he had recently made with his own hands lying in the side-ditch. How come? Apparently someone who had to transport the component to its destination lost it through negligence. Well, the worker made a fuss and quite rightly so. He felt insulted by this blatant lack of appreciation for his effort and at the same time his reaction was a sign of his attitude, his sense of being a master. He complained to the management who followed this case up and punished those guilty of this scandalous case of neglect."

Kulagin: "Punishment is not the main thing. What sort of set-up do we have here if some people do things and others undo them? A man who feels himself responsible and a master will never allow a situation like that to develop in the first place. I hope you understand what I mean because you know better than anyone how to work well. Your products are exported abroad and many of you have been to Britain and Italy where you have provided after-sale service for your machine tools. I have just heard that Victor Maligin is going to the USA to replace his fellow-metalworker. Many of you are well-placed to compare your work with that of your foreign counterparts. . ."

Roshchin, junior, a metalworker: "The Americans were surprised to see that we have a turn-table, they never had one. They still do the work manually. They also liked the design and finish of our machine tools."

Geraskov, a worker: "I have always been interested in quality. I often ask myself why our American, Swedish or German counterparts sometimes produce better things than we do. Could it be that they are

more conscientious than we are? I don't believe that. I think that everything depends on superior technology. Their machine tools are no better than ours but where they are streets ahead of us is in the mechanization of auxiliary operations, in minor technology. Some of our designs are also good, but the technological back-up and organization are not so good. We usually appeal to the worker's conscience. But I think what we should do is to create an atmosphere which would make it impossible for him to botch a job."

Kulagin: "I think the system that you have in your shop, I mean the team system, creates such an atmosphere. You all work on a common assignment and get paid for the end product, dividing up the wages and bonus pay according to what each member of the team deserves. You also plan holidays and overtime, this also is a new idea and a good one too."

Ryabich, an electrician: "I fully agree, whoever thought of this work-team system was really clever. If only we could improve the supply side then the team method would be just marvellous. . ."

Zavitov, a metal worker: "We should put more pressure on the management. After all we are a team!"

Solipatrov: "If I may draw your attention to a psychological point now. When you work on your own you are only concerned with your own earnings and the rates on your section will not change no matter how much you make. But when you work as a team on a common payroll the situation is reversed. . . Everyone is interested in pulling up the laggers to the level of the best."

Tyapkov: "As long as we work as a team on a common assignment we think that a young new-

comer should be paid a bit more too. Though we shouldn't tell him that we are paying him an advance. We have to be tactful and pedagogic about it. He will feel himself that he has to pull up his socks."

Vassiliyev, a metalworker: "Personally I was the last to join such a team. I was against the idea. I used to work as a scraper on my own and made good money. I didn't want to join any team, thinking that I wouldn't be able to make as much because there would be others who were not up to my standard who were getting the same money. I was afraid that would happen. But when I did join the team I realized that pay varied according to contribution to the common effort. I'm all for the team system now. They were right when they said that the team system makes the management show more responsibility."

Ryabich: "We have eight teams of assemblers, a team of fitters and two teams of adjusters. It's easy for me to approach the team-leader of any of them to sort out problems when they crop up. We can always solve problems without the management interfering. And whenever the management does interfere in its usual bossy style the results are always not as good as what we can do."

Kulagin: "That means that under this arrangement workers do some minor planning, is that right?"

Ryabich: "That's right, we solve our problems on the spot. It's a good thing that teams are now entrusted with some elementary planning. . ."

Solipatrov: "It is an interesting development and has affected all the other similar factories. You speak to a worker and he says he won't be able to do it by noon but will do it by tomorrow morning and you can bet on it, he will."

Ryabich: "Because he knows what he can do. It would be stupid of me to say that I can assemble eighteen machine tools inside a couple of days."

Solipatrov: "And when a manager says to his boss that he can't do something, the boss wonders whether he can do anything. That's why managers prefer to promise and to give assurances even though they have no hope of keeping the promise. Not so with workers—if a worker promises something, you can bank on it."

Ryabich: "A worker's promise carries more weight than most promises made by those who gather in the general director's office for consultation every morning. If someone there says that something will be done tomorrow then that means it will be done the day after tomorrow. By contrast, if Andrei says that he will have finished the job by tomorrow it's a sure thing and I can plan on this basis."

Kulagin (laughing): "Yes, lots of lies are told in the general director's office and the director himself can't do a thing about it!"

Ryabich: "Isn't that true, comrade Kulagin, you can confirm that, for I have been at your conferences? And here round this table, you can't tell lies. . ."

Chapter V

CLOSE-UP,

or the part in which the author succeeds in discussing one thing in detail

Our work on the film was running its course while life outside the studio ran its. I and our main characters became involved in all sorts of developments totally unrelated to the film. Who, apart from mathematicians, of course, will claim that parallel lines will never intersect? It turned out that Anatoli Solipatrov and myself had quite similar thoughts on one and the same thing.

One morning I got a letter from him which began:

"Dear comrade Levikov,

I have read with interest your article 'How to Be a Minister.' I would like to share with you some of the thoughts the reading of your article provoked and give you some of my own ideas on the same subject which I have often considered. You write. . ."

I wrote about the problems of following a business career in the USSR. It was not a matter of chance that I had brought up the subject. I had prepared for the article by making trips to different places in the USSR, by meeting and conversing with

many people occupying different posts and various rungs in the managerial hierarchy. One of the conversations I had was encoded "SCH" (the Russian initials for "one of us") and another–"KI" (for "the career of Ivanov").

One of us

I am acquainted with this manager for some time now and we can talk quite frankly. He used to be the head of department at a major transport organization and then, much to the surprise of many, resigned and moved to another department as deputy manager. His pay was better and his new post was far more prestigious. And even the trappings, various exterior things such as the inside of his office changed for the better accordingly. His new job, which was a quiet harbor compared with his former one, seemed alien to him to begin with but he had slammed into it with all his galvanic energy and conscientiousness and was now feeling himself quite at home, indeed even more in his element than he ever did at the old job.

"How could such a transformation have taken place?" I asked him.

"To be quite frank," he replied, "N knew me well."

And he named a manager I knew too.

"Have you worked together before?"

"No, it was more of a personal friendship although we did meet to sort out official problems. He once invited me for a chat and suggested that I should join his outfit. He said I was the right man for the job, capable, as he put it, to shake up a sleepy swamp. The conditions he offered looked attractive

and the chances for promotions were better than in my current job at the time."

"But can N decide such questions himself?"

"Formally this has to be co-ordinated at different levels but N is very influential. If he says that he'll take you on, he will do and the rest is just a formality, a question of technique."

"Don't you think that this style opens the door to all sorts of abuses?"

"I hope you don't suspect me of. . ?"

I hastened to assure him that was not what I meant, that I was just interested to know more in principle about this unofficial system of promotion. How widespread had it become and what it implied. And so we began to discuss the system "in principle," without touching directly upon the career of my manager-friend.

He said that cases like his were quite frequent. He could not quote any statistics, of course, but he knew personally a few similar cases. He also added that he had used the system himself at his new job by inviting someone he knew from another industry to join his outfit as a department head.

He thought that one could look at this system from different angles. Every newly-appointed economic executive prefers to rely on people he knows, on those who are ready to be loyal allies, ready to support the changes he envisages. The appointment of a new boss always entails changes: a fresh eye sees better and the new chief is eager to show what he can do and to display initiative in order to justify the trust of those who put him there. On the other hand, those who worked under the old boss often tend to resist change, at times quite unconsciously but by virtue of tradition, conservatism and loyalty to the old boss. When they don't show their opposition the results are even worse. And so you

have to opt for a show-down. You reshuffle the old team, fire someone and replace them with your own men and this, of course, generates tension. When you have your own people on the job you can start showing what you can do without being held back by anyone."

"I'm afraid this system is fraught with abuses," I insisted. "If an economic manager fills responsible posts with his own men without co-ordinating their appointments with the higher-ups, he creates a breeding ground for protectionism, nepotism and group loyalty. Have you heard what happened to Brizgalin?"

I proceeded to tell him of S. Brizgalin, formerly head of a department of the Council of Ministers in one of the constituent republics, who was fired for flagrant violations of the principles adopted in our society to select and appoint managerial personnel. He just handed out "portfolios" to his relatives, close friends, and those who were loyal to him, in other words to bootlickers. One of the men he took on was A. Nazarli, a crook and manipulator, who became one of his closest henchmen. Brizgalin always covered up for him whenever financial inspectors had a bone to pick with him. Brizgalin even promoted him to head of a central department. Brizgalin was eventually fired and punished as he deserved, but don't you think that all this had been fostered by the vicious practice of picking "your men"?

"Let me tell you something," my friend said suddenly, "the danger comes not from the fact that one unscrupulous character promotes others to his level. It is not so easy to do this today, and sooner or later anyone who does so will be brought to account as your Brizgalin was. What really is bad is that a good worker offered a position in this way

feels he is included among his boss's 'yes-men,' feels personally obligated to him and will act accordingly, will start to agree with all he says. . ."

"And do you?" I asked, breaking the rules of the game.

"He chuckled: "And you? Haven't you ever done that yourself? I'm sorry but don't you think this is a case of 'the kettle calling the pot black.' I'm far from perfect. . ."

The career of Ivanov

I was first received by Ivanov when he was seeing his last visitors for the day. His secretary led me into his office and I took a seat on one side and began watching. It was almost evening and the elderly director was visibly tired. He spoke extremely slowly, in a low voice. While I watched he refused to make any decisions on the matters brought before him by all three visitors he received, despite their insistence that he overrule the decisions taken by previous factory managers. While refusing he patiently explained his reasons. "I know nothing about it," he said, for example, about some technicalities, "and as managing director, I'm not supposed to know such things. I've got top-notch specialists with university degrees to look into things like that. They took the decisions so why should I, an incompetent in this particular matter, overrule them? I've got thousands of people at this factory and I can't hope to know everyone. Don't you agree?"

"I'll see to it that the right people will sort it out," he said about something else. "They are the experts. I know nothing about foundry work." The visitor was not sure and objected that since he was the managing director it was his duty to know ev-

erything and to decide every question. Without interrupting, Ivanov heard him out before explaining patiently, "I've been put here to help everyone in the factory do his job well. This is my job which I have to do well, to help others work well..."

The longer I listened to the managing director the more I liked him. It pleased me that he remembered so well the promises he had made. I also liked the fact that he did not feel it beneath his dignity to say to a subordinate half his age that he didn't know something. Watching Ivanov in action I went over his career in my mind's eye...

He was born in the Yaroslavl region and, as a boy, was apprenticed as a metalworker before entering the Motor Transport College in Saratov on the Volga. After graduating, he was sent to work as a technologist in a Moscow autoworks. Before long he worked his way up to senior technologist and furthered his career yet again later when he was moved to Moscow's compact car plant. He was subsequently put in charge of a major project, was then made a deputy shop chief and, finally, a shop chief. After the last war the geographic circumstances of his career changed when he was sent as a factory manager to the city of Irbit. Later, he was promoted to managing director of the Krasnyi Aksai plant in Rostov-on-Don and, finally, to director general of the giant enterprise Rostselmash with its work force tens of thousands strong. It took him twenty-eight long years to rise from an ordinary metalworker to the manager of a giant of Soviet industry. And he was still rising... Chairman of the Rostov National Economic Council... First deputy and later chairman of the North-Caucasus National Economic Council... Head of the department of the combine harvester industry...

If I saw Ivanov now occupying the post of deputy minister I would not be in the least surprised. But I saw him back at the Rostselmash plant again. And that was a bit of a surprise. It didn't seem quite logical to me.

We were left alone in his spacious office. It was getting dark outside. He asked me, whether I would care for some tea, and passed the back of his hand across his forehead as if trying to wipe away his fatigue. After tea we talked about a director's life and the problems he had to battle with today. We agreed that at the present time a director should be the product of a long and rigorous selection process based on roughly the following lines. A candidate must meet three preliminary conditions: experience of work with people, a college degree in engineering, and experience of managing industrial production... A candidate who met these three conditions would not necessarily be appointed factory manager. He would be taught the art of management and pass his apprenticeship for the job.

This is the subject of the conversation I had with the director general of the Rostselmash plant. It was the end of the month and the telephones on his desks kept ringing one after another–long-distance calls from Moscow. After spending a few days in Rostov and visiting the plant to hear what the workers thought of their director, it became clear to me why Ivanov was worried by the problem of selecting the right people as managers and why he decided to go back to the plant. Life is a very stern teacher and anyone who learns from its lessons is wise indeed.

Ivanov was followed by a long string of successors who will remain nameless here for they were all good people whose only fault was that they were round pegs in square holes and vice versa.

Two of them were, to use a local phrase, "vikings" who came from other cities and republics. One had been a chief engineer before being sent to Rostov and had a reputation at his former factory as wizard of technology. They still remember him in Rostov kindly: a real engineering genius, you couldn't put a price tag on him. They say that when the ministry decided to appoint him as managing director of Rostselmash he pleaded with them not to, saying that he was a technician who loved and understood machines but that, as far as people were concerned, he neither wanted nor knew how to manage them. Well, on that occasion the ministerial high-ups thought that he was simply displaying false modesty, playing hard-to-get perhaps, and so they promised to help him get started in his new job and appointed him managing director. He promptly showed that he was telling the truth, as he did not know how to manage his men. He neither had the patience to hear them out nor to persuade them to see his point of view. He didn't realize that these days commanding people was, at least, largely ineffective and often actually created resentment, which was far worse. Consequently, a top-notch engineer proved to be a total failure as manager. An autocratic style of leadership may help a project get off the ground initially, but its total collapse will follow inevitably and soon. And this is exactly what happened to our managing director with the mentality of an engineer. The plant was in the middle of the biggest modernization project in its history and, of course, engineering brains were at a premium, but managerial talent even more so. Our director failed so totally to establish good rapport with his subordinates that there was complete lack of understanding between them. And so he resigned.

His successor arrived from somewhere a long way

off, where he ran a comparatively small factory. He had a good reputation, was well respected in both the city and the republic and had been elected to important social organizations. When he was appointed to the giant plant he began to run it in much the same way as he had managed his former dwarf of a factory. He was eager to keep everything in his own hands, to decide every question personally and to check upon everything himself. He established direct telephone contact with every shop, insisting on regular reports from the shop floor. His instructions were carried out, a battery of telephones on his desk kept ringing away all day long, driving him mad. People tried to reason with him, advising him to get rid of the telephones since he didn't have enough time for even essential things. He agreed, but still clung to his old ideas, insisting on doing things in the way he was accustomed. If, say, someone told him that an assembly line had used up the supply of a particular nut or bolt he immediately began devoting all his time to finding the cursed nut or bolt from somewhere and spent days on that. He didn't have time to discuss more important things with shop-floor managers. As a result, things at the plant began to get out of control. Seeing this the director panicked, and started rushing about from one thing to another, and raising his voice, although he was normally a soft-spoken, good-natured man. This was all the result of his frustration and despair.

It was clear that the man was cracking up under the pressure of his new job which was a far heavier burden than his former one.

The upshot was that he had rapidly to be released of his duties. It was then that someone thought that the best thing they could do was to talk the head of the combine harvester department into

returning as managing director to the plant which had catapulted him into his elevated post.

Ivanov agreed and it should be said to his credit that the plant overcame the problems facing it and got out of the hole it was in. Nonetheless, despite this happy finale, you cannot call Ivanov's career a logical one.

I also learnt of other mistakes made in selecting top managers. The experience of the Ministry of Tractor and Agricultural Engineering (the body responsible for Rostselmash) illustrates this well.

"We are going to fire weak managing directors," I was told by a top official at the ministry. "You don't need their names, their profiles won't be of any interest to your readers." And he offered me a list of names whose profiles would adorn any newspaper. True, they were all first-class managers, with a wealth of experience, the pride and cream of Soviet industry. Only, as I thought at the time, in a matter as important as the selection of managers one cannot take comfort from the fact that it takes all sorts to make a world, that it can't be helped: some people have the ability, others don't. In the forest you can come across good mushrooms and bad mushrooms and you can't do anything about it. But factory managers are no mushrooms. We have to cultivate them, to select them with the utmost care, to eliminate or at least narrow down to a minimum the margin of error.

When I thought I had observed enough I decided to look into the problem of career in depth. I went to various cities, looked at the personnel department files of several ministries and burrowed through a mountain of sociological reports. I discovered quite a few first-class managers whose successful careers were the natural result of their unquestionable merits and managerial talent. I learnt about the in-

teresting experience of Riga, Tallinn, Dushanbe and Gorki where for the selection of top managers, they had experimented with both an elective and a competitive system. In the latter case, after a period of rigorous training and careful selection the lucky "graduates" were awarded the diploma of "professional manager." The training of the young managers itself gave the candidates practical experience as "trainee-manager" and "manager's deputy." But, at the same time, I also learned much that was both difficult to understand and regrettable. In the end *Literaturnaya Gazeta* published five of my articles of which "How to Be a Minister" was one.

Public response was most encouraging, as hundreds of letters descended on the editor from every corner of the USSR. Many of them were published in the newspaper including those whose authors were total strangers to the paper. Interestingly, Solipatrov, Danilov and Kulagin also took part in the discussion generated by the publication of my articles. It turned out that I was "doing battle" with them on two fronts at once: as interviewer and scenarist I was on the attack, while, as the initiator of that discussion, I was on the defensive, fighting off my critics.

Put briefly my ideas on the evolution of managerial careers in the USSR are as follows:

Let's say Sergei K., a twenty-year-old metalworker, dreams of becoming a minister. What would be his chances of fulfilling his dream, how high on the ladder of success is he likely to climb? It was Napoleon who is generally credited with coining the aphorism: "Every soldier should have a marshal's baton in his kit." Why shouldn't a metalworker like Sergei K. have a fling at becoming a "marshal" if he is healthy and intelligent, has plenty of energy and is not without ambition?

Where do ministers come from in the USSR? Most of them come from among deputy ministers. And where do the deputies come from? For the most part from among directors. Victor Polyakov, deputy minister and director general of the giant autoworks at Togliatti has recently been appointed minister of the automobile industry. What was he, say, ten years ago? In the mid-60s he directed the Moscow City Economic Council and was, for a time, its deputy chairman. And before that? Before that he was the managing director of Moscow's compact car plant. If we move down Polyakov's ladder of ascendance we see him at different stages as a chief engineer, a deputy chief designer, a workshop chief, a deputy workshop chief, a head of a laboratory, a test engineer, a foreman, a technician, a metalworker and finally a metalworker's apprentice. We have moved back to the year 1930 when Polyakov was fifteen.

Here is an exact list of the first trades of Soviet ministers in charge of various industries in the USSR: a worker at a creamery, a setter of automatic lines, a design engineer, a metalworker's apprentice, a telegraph inspector, a train-driver's mate, a pilot, a metalworker, an engineer, an electrician, a joiner, another metalworker, a chemical plant operative, a mechanic, a carpenter, an engineer, a senior engineer, a technician, a deputy foreman in an electrical equipment shop, an operator in a cotton ginnery, an electrician, a draftsman, a rock sampler, a turner, another metalworker and an unskilled worker.

Interestingly, the man in charge of the electronics industry, the industry of the 20th century, started out as an unskilled worker. True, he soon worked himself up to a fitter at a garage. . .

I once came upon an interesting document–a poll of 576 top managers from six European countries: Britan, Belgium, Holland, Italy, France, and the Federal Republic of Germany. The document was entitled "The Profiles of Top Managers–Presidents and Director Generals of Major Companies or Industrial Groups." The document stated, "In the imagined pantheon of our time generals, statesmen, and Nobel Prize winners are being joined by a new personality, the president of a major industrial group or company, a man playing the most important role in today's society... Who is he?"

Indeed who? Section six of the document stated: "The social backgrounds of company presidents (percentage):

From the upper class: France–85.5; Britain–69; the FRG–72.5; Italy–82.3; Belgium–78.4; Holland–83.3.

From the middle class: France–11.8; Britain–23.3; the FRG–16.5; Italy–14.6; Belgium–19.6; Holland–11.9.

From the lower class: France–2.7; Britain–7.7; the FRG–11; Italy–3.1; Belgium–2; Holland–4.8."

The authors of that document explained that by the upper class they meant proprietors, by the middle class–commercial people, and by the lower class–farmers and workers. Here is how they summed up the results of their poll: "Over three-fourths of the directors interviewed come from the upper class and only five per cent from the lower class." Apparently the poll-takers went about selecting worthy candidates for what they call "the imagined pantheon of our time" on the basis of their genealogy. There was no question of any company president starting out as a shop floor worker...

"But our social advantages do not automatically bring tangible results," Anatoli Solipatrov, himself

a metalworker, retorted immediately. His commentary on my article was printed by *Literaturnaya Gazeta.* Solipatrov wrote: "A problem of efficiency and competence arises immediately: how quickly and assuredly we are going to learn to seek out real talents and put them to work. If a specific person is to decide the career of another person, he is quite capable of falling victim to flattery, toadyism and 'requests from above.' There are many ways to the top open to those totally without talent.

"Personally, I think that in the matter of promotion, talent may be more of a brake than a help. All too often talented people are edged out. All too often they provoke ill-feeling among those without talent since they are always aggressive, dynamic and proud of being in the right. They are often resented by their own bosses because beside them the boss himself, the 'promotor,' may look foolish. And as the speed of one's rise up the ladder is of decisive importance in building a career, talented people are all too often at a disadvantage compared with pliable mediocrities whose only talent lies in playing safe and keeping on the right side of the boss."

In my story Sergei K. was quickly promoted to foreman and there is nothing out of the ordinary in that.

A character in the film, Anatoli Solipatrov, and one of my critics, complained: "Levikov quotes Kharkov University sociologists who claim that 85 per cent of foremen in industry rise from the workers. But that does not exhaust the argument. What about the remaining fifteen per cent of foremen who started the marathon race to the 'ministerial chair'? They are all young specialists. And so at the start 85 per cent of the runners are already at a disadvantage as compared with their rivals, the young specialists, these 'high fliers.' Why are they at a disadvan-

tage? Because, to start with, a worker lacks that high level of qualification and professional prestige indispensable for a foreman. By the time he acquires the right qualifications he has fallen far behind the specialist: he has to acquire a formal technical education without which one cannot hope to make a career, while an engineer has a degree in his pocket.

"Who will be so bold as to prove that that 15 per cent of the candidates for managers is the most talented? Who will try to prove that they owe their head start to merit and ability and not to their degrees? I don't know what statisticians and scientists have to say about it, but I know what ordinary people think about it. The man in the street believes that a university degree is a ticket to any high position, a stepping-stone even to a ministerial chair and that without it the maximum you can achieve is the position of a top-rate shop-floor worker. This opinion is the result of the unhealthy and wholesale stampede throughout the country towards gaining a degree at all costs. We have to eliminate the cause for this and dispel the misconception still persisting among many that a degree guarantees a head start at the beginning of one's career. First we have to do this and only then keep telling people that the head start can be guaranteed by nothing but one's ability, merit and will-power."

I cannot say that I like it when Sergei K. can go using "somebody else's ticket" (if he is appointed a junior manager he will occupy the position originally intended for someone with a degree). I don't like it that in some areas there is an attempt, using a "carrot" or a "whip" as appropriate, to drive graduates of engineering departments into positions as section or shift chiefs, hoping that natural selection will eventually sort them out. I don't like it that the high turnover rate and the wide range of

educational qualifications of many of our lower level managers turn their jobs into something of a "way station" where nobody stays long before rushing on to the real object of his ambition. I suggested a way of putting an end to this.

"Levikov has proposed setting up management schools for young workers to train them for managerial positions in industry at a junior level starting from that of foreman. These schools would admit by competition all those with a specified length of service who show managerial talent. All well and good except for the competition bit," Solipatrov commented. "But we have to find people willing to undergo this kind of competition. Indeed, a prospective candidate should want to be a boss at least. If I know anything about workers, not all of them do, far from it. Then again, in a situation like this it is not so easy to agree to submit yourself to selection on a competitive basis, psychologically this may be a painful experience.

"I, in general, take particular exception to competitive exams. Take, for instance, at university. Who can be so bold as to sort out applicants into gifted and ungifted on the basis of a competitive exam? The average examiner has only minutes in which to find out whether the young man before him is a well-coached mediocrity or a genuine talent who cannot overcome his embarrassment and cuts a poor figure because of his stuttering and disjointed delivery. No one can guarantee that genuine talents have been selected at the competitive entrance exams or just capable parrots or, even worse, human tape-recorders or mirrors, who can, perhaps, display the knowledge of even a professor but it will always be only a reflection of someone else.

"I am, perhaps, putting it in too strong terms and someone may have got the wrong idea. Let

me explain. I am convinced that each person is an individuality with his own particular talent and there are cases and situations where 'the tape-recorders' and 'mirrors' can put on a scintillating performance. But the trouble is that college entrance exams in their present form have distorted the picture for everyone and in the first instance for these unfortunate 'tape-recorders' and 'mirrors,' having encouraged them to go into fields for which they simply lack the potential.

"Personally I am against mandatory competitive exams for grown-up workers. I believe the best examination for him should be the results of his performance on the job, his conduct generally: What is he like? What has he actually done? What is he capable of doing? These are the questions that count."

By promoting Sergei K. gradually I eventually appointed him chief of a major workshop at which point, a very critical point, perhaps a turning point of his career, I left him. He was about to be elected secretary of the works' party committee when I said good-bye to him. By then Sergei had successfully graduated from the correspondence department of college, having thus outstripped many of his colleagues. A major workshop is the launching pad where many top managers and economic executives start their meteoric rise. Some of today's ministers including Aleksei Antonov, Anatoli Kostousov, Nikolai Tarasov, Alexander Shokin used to be workshop chiefs. Later they were promoted to factory managers and further up. As for Sergei K.'s election as secretary of his works' party committee it fitted neatly into a realistic model of an industrial career today. Dmitri Paramonov, for example, used to be a foreman, he was later promoted to secretary of the Komsomol committee, to workshop chief and, like

my hero Sergei K., was elected secretary of the works' party committee. The next rung up the party ladder was head of the industry department of the district party committee. And then he was back in industry again only this time at the next management level: deputy works' manager. And then another turn to deputy chairman of the district executive committee and secretary of the district party committee. This was followed by a return to economic management but at a new level: as deputy department chief of a ministry and, finally, as director of a major industrial enterprise–in Paramonov's case, Moscow's second watch factory.

Of course many other people have had a different evolution, as, for example, Nikolai Rizhkov, director general of the giant Uralmash. He, too, started out as a foreman after graduating from a polytechnic. Later he was promoted to shop-floor chief, put in charge of a welding unit, made chief engineer, etc. He was appointed director at the age of 41 and director general at 42. However, according to sociologists, a more typical career is one which includes a spell of full-time service as a top official at some public organization operating within an industrial enterprise, or as a top official of a district or city Soviet or party body. The average director in the USSR is a production organizer and manager and also a public leader, the leader of a work collective. Naturally, when selecting candidates and promoting people to this elevated post experience of work with people is a prime criterion.

In short, I have put my Sergei K. on his personal launching pad. Whether he will blast off successfully I dare not predict because this depends not only on his merits but also on those who will be pressing the buttons. Will they be able to see in him the right potential and ability? What criteria will

they be guided by? On the basis of what characteristics would they select Sergei K. from among other worthy candidates with equal chances? Will the selectors be guided by their sixth sense or science?

Trying to answer these questions I analyzed a large body of factual data and then formulated suggestions which, when printed by *Literaturnaya Gazeta,* generated a nation-wide discussion lasting about two years. Here is a sample of some of the more notable contributions different people made to the discussion.

Levikov: "Past services are no guarantee of suitability for a new job. I realize that this is a widespread misconception. What we need are tests to scrutinize candidates for subsequent training, apprenticeship or for holding in reserve. We need a special research centre, an institution to deal with management personnel problems. A scientific approach to the question of management will not develop of its own accord."

Kulagin: "I must confess my hand often trembled as I was signing some of those appointments. Why did I sign in the end? Because there was no one else to choose from so I was obliged to appoint them. The fact is that the separation of design and research organizations from industry has been largely responsible for the rapid aging of factory and plant personnel. So it is not only a matter of creating a reserve and of introducing tests. And it is even less a matter of introducing computer technology to assist in picking good managers."

L. (Alma-Ata): "Reading the articles on careers I was particularly incensed by the so-called 'protectionism.' I don't think it is as innocuous a matter as some would have us believe. It is by no means a harmless bit of mischief on the part of some of our influential economic managers who take on

'their men.' These cases of nepotism are all too frequent for us to ignore them. It is a real wonder sometimes to see what a meteoric rise to a high position an ignoramus can enjoy. And one can't help wondering if he has not been catapulted into his elevated post by a strong and influential hand."

Solipatrov: "In principle, if the distribution of top management posts is based on belonging to a certain circle of society, where positions follow almost by heredity, or on protectionism, or nepotism then this prevents the selection of really talented people from every section of the population who are committed to ideals and devoted to the people. The key to solving the problem of top management posts lies in allowing a broad and free influx of talents."

Bogomyakov, first secretary of the Tyumen Regional Party Committee: "Considering the question of the 'mechanism' of promotion raised during the discussion, I did not feel any need to revise my own views on the principles adopted in our society."

Kostandov, minister of the chemical industry: "The immutability of principles does not at all mean that there are no problems concerning our top economic managers. That assertion would be true on one condition: if time stood still.'

Velsh, a sociologist, Moscow: "Solipatrov is right when he says that talented people are often at a disadvantage as compared with obliging mediocrities. Often out of a sense of self-preservation the boss literally uproots all those around him who could potentially be his rivals and who might be capable of eclipsing him. When considering this I remembered an almost scientific bit of wisdom which I read, I think, in Stendhal. He said that one can only rely on something that offers resistance."

Burtyelov, Barnaul: "Some people pick assistants who will obviously be 'yes-men', largely ignoring

their ability to do the job competently. The overriding object for such bosses is to assure that their assistants are pliable and obliging. Often such 'assistants' move up the career ladder together with their bosses. And sometimes they also transform themselves from the 'pawns' they are into 'queens' and other pieces of weight and influence. We must find a reliable method of closing all channels of promotion for such mediocrities, for all those whose only talent lies in being 'yes-men.' "

Levikov: "Unfortunately we sometimes read in an obituary that so-and-so 'has travelled a long way from being a fitter's apprentice to the eminence of becoming a major economic executive.' Unfortunately, an obituary is the most accessible source of information for the general public. I think we should publish the biography of people who are appointed to top management posts. It is a matter of regret that in many cities people learn only by hearsay about major reshuffles in the management structure of major local industrial enterprises even though sometimes the industrial association involved may be the size of a city."

Kostandov, minister of the chemical industry: "Selection for top management posts should be carried out publicly."

Levonko, Herson Region: "I am convinced that the more people take part in the selection process, the better the quality of top managers selected."

Brilliantov, Tchusov and others, Tula: "We read in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* that workers in Riga have been allowed as an experiment to choose their own foremen and section chiefs. We fully support this democratic principle. Is the example of Riga going to spread?"

Somov, Sverdlovsk: "I am against this kind of democracy. The more I think about the principle

of electivity on the shop floor the less sense I see in it. We should appoint people to management posts after careful selection. We need people who are well-trained and experienced rather than those whom their subordinates think would be the most convenient for themselves. Production management is just too responsible a thing to be entrusted to general meetings of shop-floor personnel."

Gorzhov, Alma-Ata: "I am all for electivity. That is the only way to do it. Just think of all those complaints in the national newspapers about frequent cases of rudeness, ruthlessness, indifference, and abuse of power committed by overzealous managers who have become too big for their boots. If we had electivity such people would never have been put at the head of things in the first place. I think that replacing appointment with electivity would have a tremendous political significance. It would be a healthy development and a great step forward in the development of our democracy."

Feshchenko, Kiev: "We can do without electivity. I share the opinion of director general Smirnov from Kiev who suggested the rank and file should give character references on candidates for promotion. Under this arrangement a candidate would be informed of what his future subordinates think of him but without letting him know who said what. The same system could be used when selecting a higher-level manager."

Ivanov, Leningrad: "I am against subordinates giving anonymous character references on their future chief. Who wants this kind of innovation? Most responsible officials have a good idea of what the prospective candidates for top management posts are like and are in a position to give an exhaustive assessment of each of them."

Sokolov, a shop chief, Serpukhov: "I think character references from below are a good idea. It will help in forming an objective opinion about a candidate for promotion."

Kharpovitch, Leningrad: "I repeat that I am all for having a powerful man in the manager's chair. A manager must have confidence that his every instruction will be carried out in the best possible way and he must select his assistants accordingly."

Razauskas, a college lecturer, Vilnius: "Such a manager may develop into a wilful and unreasonable despot who will think nothing of trampling on his subordinates."

Muzyka, a chief engineer, Ulan-Ude: "I think it is high time to introduce legal standards regulating the appointment procedure for management posts. First of all we have to introduce certain qualifications for various levels of management (either a general or specialized education)."

Rotahin, Novotroitsk: "It is high time to introduce different categories of managers specifying the educational level and age 'ceiling' for each category. Why shouldn't we expect a top-level manager to have, apart from a college diploma in a field of engineering, also a diploma from a management school, or a master's or doctor's degree?"

Kulagin: "A diploma should not be a mandate for promotion."

Gromov, Kuibyshev: "A number of ministries have produced an age qualification for different levels of managers. Some people suggest that this should be introduced and legalized everywhere. I am against the idea. As for degrees and diplomas for managers of different categories I don't think there is any need for that either. I don't agree with those who would like to see an educational qualification for managers introduced."

Sokolov, Tchkalovsk: "I think a statute on economic managers is long overdue. Such a statute should lay down conditions for promotion and appointment."

Zhigalin, minister of heavy and transport engineering: "Old forms of personnel work are no longer relevant to the conditions of today."

Yeryomenko, Moscow: "It is easy to imagine a manager in a high position who is just a designer or technologist but who is without managerial training. Factors responsible for this state of affairs include the fear of committing an error, an attachment to stereotyped solutions, a psychological vacuum and an atmosphere which stultifies new and bold ideas."

Kazakov, Moscow: "Are there perhaps contradictions in our concept of promotion to all managerial positions? Are economic managers really interested to know what their subordinates think of them? Are there any justified scientific opinions concerning competitiveness and the mandatory replacement of managers upon the expiry of an optimum term of office? I think in the field of management careers a definite system with legal backing is long overdue."

Kalinkin, deputy department chief, Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education: "Who is training economic managers today and where? Most economic managers are trained in the hard school of experience by the method of trial and error. This is the central problem. Managers must be trained both before they are appointed to particular posts and while they occupy them."

Rozenbaum, senior research associate, the State Law Institute, USSR Academy of Sciences: "To use the definition given by Rovnin, minister of geology in the Russian Federation, management is a special

art, and it calls for two diplomas, a college diploma and one from a management school."

Bogomyakov: "During my conversation with the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* correspondent, I must confess, I hit below the belt. I turned the tables on him by asking a series of questions similar to those that were raised by the newspaper in the discussion. Who is better, a poet with a diploma or without one? With experience or without?"

Vodyanitski, Dzerzhinsk: "Which poet is better, one with a diploma or one without one? I would like to ask the author, 'Which doctor he would prefer, one with a degree or one without one, or which driver–one with a driving licence or one without one?' If we are to split hairs, then to doubt the usefulness of 'a director's diploma' is failure to understand the moral and material losses which society incurs because of the inadequate training of many of its economic leaders."

Bogomyakov: "The pattern of the career ladder that emerges from this discussion is far too generalized, while work with managerial personnel as it has been and will be conducted by our party is always concrete and individualized. . ."

Rozenbaum: "Bogomyakov entitled his article 'Life Standardization' but does life negate the need for the legal regulation of economic activity? Or of any other field for that matter? It is perfectly legitimate to oppose standardization and at the same time, for the sake of the common weal, to demand that work with managerial personnel should be streamlined."

Literaturnaya Gazeta editors asked the Sociological Research Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences to analyze and assess the mail received in connection with the discussion. On November 30, 1977 *Literaturnaya Gazeta* printed a massive con-

cluding survey in which Nikolai Alekseyev, head of a department of the institute, gave these observations: "Reading these hundreds of letters you cannot help asking yourself, why so many people from different walks of life have responded so eagerly to the discussion? The answer, as we see it, is that this discussion has profound social interest and touches upon the essence of our socialist way of life."

Naturally, during interviews with our worker-publicists the conversation repeatedly turned to the discussion in *Literaturnaya Gazeta.*

Chapter VI

ASSOCIATIVE EDITING,

or thinkers of the past and present on things eternal and passing

The day of editing was coming nearer. We were running out of the film we had been given. Some members of our team had in the meantime been transferred elsewhere to work on other films. We still had a few ideas that required additional filming but the studio's production department categorically refused to allow us that luxury. I was going to leave Moscow for a week but my director protested and pleaded with me to stay with him for the editing.

After making our way through several rooms where we heard in turn a hoarse bass, cheerful music and the squeak of a tape-recording being played back at the wrong speed, we found ourselves in a room containing a pile of film cases. The one on top had the rather sinister inscription: "Odds and Ends of Danilov."

A somewhat distraught Bob-sleigh introduced us to the girl sitting at the editing table and then pointed to his watch. I began apologizing for being a bit late but it turned out that our director was worried about something else.

"No, came on time," he began in a strange voice, "I think it my duty to warn you that in three minutes from now the place will be blown up. Of course you are free to leave now."–"Blown up?" I asked not a little surprised for in the past I had not noticed that our director displayed any inclination towards pulling other people's legs. "Literally blown up," Bob-sleigh replied and added, "someone telephoned to say that at 4 p.m. there will be an explosion here. We don't believe it but some of our people have left just in case."

Feeling my back go unpleasantly cold I recalled the empty corridors at the studio, which had rather surprised me because normally they were crowded. Everyone fell silent and kept his eyes on the face of the clock as the second-hand moved jerkily round and round. Less than a minute to go. "Where is the emergency exit?" Sofia asked, her voice thundering in the arctic silence. "Through there," Bob-sleigh answered, and, despite his portly figure, rushed to show her where. "We'll stay," Sofia said sitting down at the editing table. "We'll start with Solipatrov, shall we?" The clock on the wall was staring unblinkingly like a cobra poised for an attack. About ten minutes past four we still kept a wary eye on the clock until all of us burst out in a peal of liberating laughter... And somewhere in the depths of the giant city, stroking a telephone there was that smirking idiot, a lonely misanthrope, a devoted and selfless lover of black humour.

Rather out of context I suggested: "Let's have that bit by Anatoli Solipatrov again about the deficiency of spiritual vitamins in some adults and children's hunger for adventure..."

Solipatrov's notes which are being prepared for publication at Sovietskaya Rossiya Publishers touch a subject which seems rather far removed from his

profession. He writes here about children, how they grow up and how their personalities develop. Although he lacks a formal education and is pressed for time, Solipatrov has spent years exploring people's souls in his search for the truth.

Aristotle's psychology marked a momentous chapter in the evolution of the science of the soul. The classical philosopher illuminated for man many dark recesses of his own nature. I copied out from his treatise *On the Soul* the following: "... While knowledge of any kind is a thing to be honoured and prized, one kind of it may, either by reason of its greater exactness or of a higher dignity and greater wonderfulness in its objects, be more honourable and precious than another, on both accounts we should naturally be led to place in the front rank the study of the soul. The knowledge of the soul admittedly contributes greatly to the advance of truth in general..."

Solipatrov who has never read anything by Aristotle nor by any other great philosopher writes in his notes: "Those of my friends who I have let read some of my notebooks sometimes reproached me for believing too much in psychology. They argued that psychology is, after all, devised by human beings. I countered that by saying that psychology directs human beings. Psychology is indeed a point with me and I look upon it as a remedy and realize that, like a remedy, it should be taken in small doses. But today when so many specialists have been trained in every area of human endeavour no other science is more important than the science of psychology."

Here is another coincidence, no less striking. Solipatrov writes: "No lever, to use a current phrase, whether economic or physical can act upon man in any other way but through our psychology, that sec-

retary and custodian of our actions. No matter what lever we may devise, however clever and ingenious, if psychology does not accept it then its efficiency is nil and often even less, since it is counterproductive."

Immanuel Kant wrote in his *Observations on the Sense of the Beautiful and the Sublime:* "I shall never be able to convince another of my point of view other than with the help of his own thoughts. I should therefore presume that another man is of sound mind, otherwise it would be futile to hope that I can convince him by arguments. Similarly I can move another person only through the medium of his own sentiments and feelings; I should therefore assume that he is not a stranger to compassion, otherwise he will never feel revulsion if I describe to him a vice and when I praise virtue before him he will never experience an aspiration to attain it."

Solipatrov writes: "I don't know whether it is good or bad, whether it is normal or distorted and pathological, but I am being quite sincere. It is impossible for anyone to insult me by calling me names: by saying that I am 'an idiot,' 'a cretin,' 'a gawk,' etc. When someone says that, he either speaks the truth, or is mistaken, or tells a lie. If he speaks the truth there is nothing to feel hurt about. You should say 'thank you' and try to reform yourself. If he sincerely sees me as an idiot, well, it will not be difficult for me to make him change his mind. But if he lies in the hope of upsetting me, of provoking me to react in anger, there is no reason for me to help him do that."

Immanuel Kant: "Should there be a man who would hate me, this would worry me not because I would be afraid of such a man but because it would be unpleasant for me to have something within me that would give grounds for others to hate me. Indeed I would be inclined to suppose that another

person hated me with good reason. I would therefore seek a meeting with him in order to help him to get to know me better... But if, on the other hand, I saw that banal and repugnant prejudices, such as envy or jealous vanity which deserve even greater contempt, make it quite impossible (for me) to avoid the hatred of others, I would elect to be hated rather than despised."

I hope the reader has imagination and sense of humour enough not to accuse me of trying to put in the same intellectual rank a Leningrad metalworker and the giants of world philosophy. My only purpose in referring to Aristotle and in quoting from Immanuel Kant is to emphasize the essential continuity of human thought. How ideas combine together and interreact, and how this is manifested not only in the creations of great minds but also in the humble reflections of ordinary mortals. The right of a people, whether big or small, to create things of genius has long been recognized. A people create their own language and evolve their own ethics which they cast in ever living folklore. This reveals their spirit, their self-awareness and their identity. The voice of Solipatrov, Danilov and Sidorov is but a tiny part of the collective thought and knowledge of human existence of the ordinary working men of Russia. Millions of such home-spun philosophers hold forth over a drink with friends on every subject under the sun. Only some of them, like the participants in our film, try to set their thoughts down on paper. In the USSR where any worker may, if he wishes, get his writings published in the national press, may publish his own books and may come in contact with professional writers and journalists, the development of social thought is not determined by the work of professional philosophers, economists, historians, sociologists and psycholo-

gists alone. Alongside the journals and other scholarly publications of various institutes of the Academy of Sciences we find springs of popular wisdom and thought coming from the depths of the collective genius of ordinary people, who develop ideas untainted by scientific knowledge.

However, I would not have been sincere had I begun to assert that Solipatrov and other thinking worker-intellectuals are in a majority today. No, they are in the minority. And the fact that we invited worker-publicists to take part in our film of itself meant that we would inevitably be selective. But one thing is certain and that is that these people faithfully reflect the consensus of their milieu. They express an opinion that took shape in the soul of their class, not one imposed upon them from outside.

It is interesting to follow the single chain of these concepts starting in childhood and stretching through a person's life, from his search for his own particular place in life to the point where he acquires a sense of being a master of socialist production.

Solipatrov says: "A child who has just learnt to string a simple sentence together delivers what is perhaps the most meaningful and briefest speech of his life: 'I'll do it myself!' In later life he may forget his first speech but for the rest of his days this 'I'll do it myself!' will remain his guiding star. This feeling will be experienced by a college professor when he successfully mends a tap in his flat with his own hands, or by an undereducated driver when he successfully solves an equation during an evening class. As soon as a child learns to walk he develops an irresistible urge to do things by himself, to create by himself. No one is able to check this urge, not even his parents who claim that they will spare nothing for the sake of their child.

"What demands are made on our children when they start school? What demands are made on all those little Columbuses and Newtons, on all the six-year-old artists, captains and doctors? The teacher would probably like to be able to put a miniature tape-recorder in their heads, in order to ensure that they repeat without distortion whatever he speaks into the mike. Excellent marks would then be guaranteed. Seeing his own reflection in the mirror of his pupils' heads the teacher would be able to report on their satisfactory academic progress but that would be all. However, a pupil who fails to do well today is not, and I repeat, not necessarily an utter fool, any more than an honours pupil will necessarily develop into a great scientist. . ."

I am interrupting Solipatrov's thoughts at this point in order to emphasize the intimate connection between what he says about school today and his personal tragedy at school. The narrow-minded teacher who made Anatoli, an impressionable and inspired boy, repeat the fifth grade implanted in his soul a lack of confidence in his own powers. At the same time this made him apply stiff standards, perhaps too stiff, to what he would say and do in subsequent life. On the one hand, this exactingness towards oneself is a good thing for self-education but, on the other hand, not everyone is strong enough to cope with it and in some cases this exactingness may cause people to be psychologically disturbed.

During the public showing of our film at Moscow's Journalists' Club I introduced Solipatrov, who had come specially from Leningrad, to Semyon Gurevitch, my schoolteacher. Gurevitch was the first adult to impress lofty ideals upon me: the notions of conscience and duty. (I was fifteen at the time.) He was the man who cultivated my love for reading and writing which was to determine my subsequent

career in journalism. I first met Gurevitch during the war when I attended a military school. Semyon Gurevitch would enter the classroom with a huge rucksack on his back packed full with books. Before beginning class he would take out of the rucksack the Nagant revolver which he hated to keep on his belt but which he had to have as a teacher at a military school. He would then place a dozen books on his desk and, finally, would take out from the seemingly bottomless rucksack an ancient battered gramophone with a few records. We, his pupils, would follow all this in fascination. Gurevitch would put on a record of an old Russian song with words by Pushkin. He would sit and listen to the music without paying the least attention to us. He would play one record after another, music by Borodin, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff. And then, suddenly, without bothering to announce his plan for the lesson, he would begin telling us about Pushkin, in a way that no textbooks could. He would tell us about Pushkin as if the great poet had been his close friend.

Gurevitch's library in his Moscow flat contains thousands of books. Indeed, all the walls of his flat are covered with bookshelves. His current pupils often visit him to browse through the books, to think, and to discuss their problems with their teacher. Here is a typical scene as described by Semyon Gurevitch in his book *A Teacher's Laboratory:* "One of my former pupils once called on me to ask advice. 'I am a metalworker,' he says. 'I am attending evening school, of course. I can't complain, I make good money. I give it all to my mother. I'm her eldest. I have a girl-friend who reads a lot. Naturally, I'm trying to keep up with her, as best I can. The other day she gave me *The Unknown Masterpiece* to read. Tell me, did Frenhofer and his 'Noiseuse' ever exist or did Balzac invent them? Where

can I read about it? Compare it with Gogol's *The Portrait*? What else can you recommend me to read on art?' "

It is a pity that Solipatrov did not have such a kind and helpful mentor when at school. He himself admits there are sad gaps in his reading. Usually it is these gaps that tend to make his thoughts about the school more interesting. Once a school drop-out, Solipatrov, developed into a top-notch mechanic whose ideas and opinions coincide closely with those of Semyon Gurevitch, a gifted school-teacher.

Solipatrov writes: "And now imagine a good, intelligent pupil who wants to understand, experience, weigh and compare everything for himself. This takes time and may affect his current progress and his teacher may not be pleased with him. He may even fail to make good at some point or other. The moment he does they all come down on him like a ton of bricks: accusations of letting the side down, bringing disgrace upon the class... And gradually he accustoms himself to the idea that his IQ is below average. Often this idea persists for the rest of his life."

Gurevitch: "I asked a teacher whether he knew his pupils' interests. 'Of course,' he replied. 'How do you know them?'–'I ask them questions.'–'And do they ask you any questions?'–If your pupils don't ask you questions it may mean that they don't have faith in your competence and you will be the last to know what is troubling them. By replying to their questions you teach them to see things better, to think, to be surprised and to work hard. You teach them to take their own counsel with a book... A good explanation is not one after which there are no questions but rather one that provokes thought and stimulates independent inquiry, new questions and new interests."

Solipatrov: "A pupil with a good memory does well at school. Everybody, including himself, gets accustomed to the idea that he is so clever. Only memory and intelligence are far from being the same thing. And yet everybody seems to be happy and confident that the boy will do well. He enters college without too much difficulty. What then? There is no one for him to imitate anymore. Life awards an excellent mark not for a ready-made answer to its problems that you may look up in a textbook but only for an answer that you have found for yourself."

Gurevitch: "Tomorrow they will have to stand on their own feet and look for the answer themselves... It is so interesting to watch them argue during class, to see how they prove their point. A question-and-answer session in the classroom must never resemble an interrogation session and, for pupils who are at the bottom of the class, the teacher must never look like a prosecuting counsel. I don't see the pupil's mind as a left-luggage department at a railway station where any mental luggage doesn't stay longer than a day but rather as a controller service department where it is possible to bring out from the remotest recesses of the brain the right 'wagon' and by adding it to the others form a train ready to set off for a long journey."

Interestingly enough, the thoughts of a worker and a school-teacher based on their personal experience are echoed by scientists. A well-known Soviet sociologist Igor Kon, Doctor of Philosophy, writing about his own investigations and about those of his colleagues in his book *The Sociology of the Personality,* warns against the danger of interpreting upbringing and educating as external processes which can mechanically superimpose social attitudes on the individual. It is impossible to "make," "pro-

duce" or "mould" a person as one can a thing or a product. One may only cause him to join in an activity and stimulate his own activity in the process.

Why am I quoting what a Soviet worker thinks about school education and the upbringing of children and adolescents in general? I could, of course, have turned everything into a joke and have just said that in the USSR the working class is often called "his majesty the king" and that the children are a "privileged class," implying that it would be a poor king indeed who would not give top priority to ensuring the welfare of his privileged subjects. But, joking apart, we attach exceptional importance to the upbringing and education of the rising generation of Soviet citizens, those young men and women who will have to take over from us and continue our work. The Communist Party, the Soviet state and the public have joined forces to tackle the problem. And since for people in this country this is a top priority, there is hardly an author, whether he be a scientist, a professional writer, a manager or a worker, who writes about social questions without expressing his views on children, adolescents and the younger generation in general. Everyone has his own approach to this problem, but all share a common desire to see a rising generation which has firm morals and is socially active and hard-working. We, for our part, tried to reflect this in our film.

Problems relating to education, upbringing and the vocational orientation of young people are all close to Solipatrov, Danilov and Sidorov and to Kulagin who, until recently, headed a major firm. They are equally close to those workers who took part in the discussion held in one of the firm's workshops.

Solipatrov says: "The efficiency of a society depends on the efficiency of each of its members, while

the efficiency of each member depends on how close he has come to finding his true place in life. Psychology should help in this search." Let us compare this with what Igor Kon writes in his book *The Sociology of the Personality*: "A wide freedom of choice and less social constraints contribute to the formation of a more flexible social character and produce a wider range of individual variations. The reverse of this progress is the psychological difficulty encountered in the process of identification. A man is confronted by a very wide range of possibilities out of which he has to choose one. But he can only find out whether he has made the right choice in the course of practical activity, in the course of pursuing the chosen path. If I have never, say, tried my hand at drawing, how on earth am I to find out if I have a talent for it? Even many gifted people failed to discover their true place in life straight away. Thus, out of a thousand outstanding Americans, sixteen per cent changed their professions, with thirty-seven per cent having done so twice, and twenty per cent more than twice. Besides, self-determination goes hand in hand with self-limitation. A school pupil is nothing and nobody in a professional sense, he is 'a clean slate,' a pure potential. He may be a fitter, a doctor or a spaceman."

He may be but what will he actually become? Personally I believe that choosing one's profession at an early stage is not so important. Life in its gigantic theatre will eventually give the right roles to the right actors on its stage. It may not be too late for some actors to adjust some things at a later date themselves.

Georgi Kulagin, in his book *Worker–Manager–Scientist*, takes a somewhat different approach to the problem: "By telling young people that everyone should choose his trade or occupation according to

his vocation and bent, that one should, above all, enjoy what one is doing, we are actually telling them, whether we realize it or not, that they should look for jobs that are easy and pleasant to do. This, of course, is nonsense because there are no easy jobs, unless they are imaginary ones." Kulagin went on to describe how, one day, a worker from his plant put the following application on his desk: "I request your permission to leave the foundry shop and take an electrician's job, for three reasons: firstly, I am taking a correspondence course at a polytechnical institute, secondly, I am following an English course in the evening and thirdly, the main reason, I am learning to play the piano at the Conservatory and my present job at the foundry shop is inhibiting my academic progress."

"Different people would probably react differently to such an application," Kulagin commented. "Some would probably hail the irresistible urge to acquire knowledge and culture that our young people display. Others would probably admire the inexhaustible energy and enthusiasm of a young man who is carrying a quadruple burden. Still others would finally applaud the fact that in this country higher education is within the reach of one and all. But my own reaction as factory manager was different still. I felt alarmed for I was not at all sure at that moment whether in the foreseeable future the country would have all the foundry men we will need." In this connection, Kulagin cited rather aptly an old Tartar fable in which an old man asked his neighbour: "If I'm a mullah and you're a mullah who is then going to feed the horse?"

Sitting in the editing room we kept playing back the film, trying to compare different sequences and to decide on the final version.

Solipatrov: "Old women keep telling us that in their day young people were different, better than they are today. I know that many people believe them and even echo them. Does that mean that we are heading for a crisis?"

Sidorov: "I wouldn't say that young people today are not as good as they used to be in our day. I often argue with people who say that they used to be. But when I compare myself with the lads in my team I see that, in some respects, I was worse when I was their age. I was not as well educated and lacked their ability to concentrate."

Kulagin: "Young people today often reason that they would rather sit in the office and earn less than work at a factory, because they feel that when they get home after the day's work they can concentrate on their own interests. I know that not all young people are like that. But there are quite a few of them, especially those who still depend on their parents. Therefore they are a problem."

Solipatrov: "We have to make an allowance for age. Let's face it, we of the older generation are looking at the world with different eyes from those we had when we were twenty. At eighteen people of our generation had no problem understanding their coevals and yet today they find eighteen-year-olds startlingly different and unpredictable. And they tend to notice only the bad in young people. So what you get is a distorted, unbalanced picture. Mankind cannot be heading for worse things. There will always be more good people and good actions than bad people and evil actions. The same applies to young people."

Sidorov: "And I insist that our young people are good. Take Yuri Medvedyev, who joined our workshop after finishing school ten years ago. Since then he has become a good turner and for the past year

has worked himself up to a designer. He has two inventions to his credit. His mother works in our shop and whenever I ask her whether she is pleased with her son she replies in the affirmative. In particular she admires her son's independence. What does a young man need? He needs recognition and to be entrusted with a big and important job. He needs to see that others need him, that he is indispensable... Medvedyev told me once: 'I've done so little, I could have done more if I hadn't wasted my time.'"

Danilov: "That's because he is now an inventor! Creativity is the best thing for putting anyone on the right track."

Solipatrov: "I agree with Danilov. He likes both inventing and his fellow-inventors. But I'm afraid it is not given to everyone to be an inventor. There are all sorts of talents. Some are artists at heart, some economists. And there are just good Russian workers who will make anything, even an ordinary horse cart to last for centuries."

...We kept coming back to that bit about the horse cart. I liked the way Solipatrov put it and the way he accompanied what he said with very picturesque and meaningful gestures in order to drive his point home.

Suddenly it became clear to us just how different the three participants in the film were. Danilov kept smiling and when he spoke he did so with a roguish expression in his eyes. Sidorov was his staid and solid self, very serious and with a frown of concentration. He allowed himself to laugh only twice, but when he did so it was a hearty laugh: once at the round-table discussion in the firm's workshop, and once during the school dance. He rambled off the point a bit and was rather difficult to follow. Yet although his manner of speaking was sometimes far

from direct, all he said had a confident ring about it. Solipatrov was a totally different speaker. He preferred to do his thinking in the full view of his audience. You could see the mental effort he was making, his huge hands helping him to get the words out. When he did say something at the end of a long and pregnant pause the words seemed to fall out with a screech. Each one was like a bit of granite that fell on the audience with a weighty but meaningful thud.

We were drawing to the end of the editing. We were getting ready to submit the "mute version" (unaccompanied by sound-track) to the studio's bosses. Our director still had his doubts about certain sections of the film and kept asking us permission to cut out this or that. The closer we came to the end the more he seemed to trust the magic power of his scissors. With us it was just the reverse, we insisted on putting whatever was suitable into the final version, especially edited bits from the Solipatrov interview. My wife, Sofia, often got into heated arguments with Bob-sleigh whenever he suggested cutting Solipatrov down to size. On a couple of occasions a major conflict between her and our director seemed inevitable. The situation was saved each time by Lev Onishko, a great diplomat, and the editor who had involved me in this adventure with the film in the first place. He would crack a joke or two and in this way diffuse the charged atmosphere.

The problem of independence was of interest to our interviewees not only in the context of children and upbringing. They were even more concerned about the limits of creative independence allowed a workingman and the whole work collective. Solipatrov, for instance, claims that today's worker comes to the factory for something more than just

doing the day's work and getting paid for it. He comes in order to feel that he is important and counts for something and this is perhaps one of his main considerations.

As the science of management is invading every area of public life, people are beginning to see more clearly the advantages offered by independence and its corresponding responsibility. True, it is extremely difficult to weigh these two concepts on the balance of prudence and common sense. Often one or other of the scales tilts the balance and, for the time being, there is, unfortunately, no equilibrium.

If I may quote from my own book *Man of Business*, published last year: "The relationship between rights and duties touches upon very subtle and sensitive areas of human behaviour. Norbert Weiner once aptly described people capable of great industry but of little independent initiative as the chamberlains of the harem of ideas to which their Sultan is wed. Philosophers point to the danger of an excessively rigid, authoritarian style of management and warn that time-serving techniques kill individuality and that the independence of judgement is by no means a life-long gift. A man who is deprived of independence for a long time, who shrinks from expressing his own judgement and who always takes his cue from somebody else, runs the risk of discovering one day that he has no independent judgement left and that he is incapable of independent action."

What is the problem of independence in the context of the workingman's milieu? Earlier on in the present book I referred to that part of our film in which the workers of a Leningrad factory shop were free to allocate their collective earnings received for assembling a machine tool according to what each member of the team deserved, without any inter-

ference from the management. The team decided how much each should get, when each should go on duty and when each should have a holiday. This attracted the attention of Solipatrov, Sidorov and Danilov who had not seen anything of the kind at their own respective factories. Interestingly, in the construction industry this system is quite widespread but not in industry generally. "Is it possible to convert the whole of a major plant to this system?" Solipatrov asked me once and I did not know what to reply at the time since I had never heard of it being done. I have done now, however.

When we finished the film I was invited to make a visit to Kaluga, the hometown of Tsiolkovski, the father of aeronautics and rocketry. The journey took three hours by train. At the Kaluga turbine plant I saw work teams who, like their Leningrad counterparts, worked on a common job-sheet method and got paid collectively for the whole of the end product. There is only one difference: the system was operated all over the plant and not only by the assembly shop as in Leningrad. Members of the team take part in planning and the shop's management take into account their demands and ideas. The workers themselves elect the team council and the team leaders elect their own council under the shop manager. The decisions of the latter carry the power of administrative orders in the shop concerned. One day a foreman overruled the opinion of a work team on how the pay should be allocated and had his own way. The workers complained to the shop council which ordered the foreman to obey the original collective decision.

Team leaders in the shop elect a council which reports to the factory manager. But the factory manager, the secretary of the factory's party branch and the shop managers can only attend the council's meetings by invitation. The team-leader council has

power to take independent decisions. Please note that the team leaders are shop-floor workers themselves as there are no full-time team leaders at the Kaluga turbine plant, nor, for that matter, in the rest of Soviet industry.

Now, what can the team-leader council do? What power does it have? Here is a sample of some of the decisions the council adopted during 1977:

March 1, 1977. Deputy chief engineer B. A. Gobelyev shall draw up a timetable for delivery of equipment to shop No... Signed: Tchernov.

March 15, 1977. The management of shop No... have failed in their duties. Signed: Tchernov.

June 8, 1977. A. A. Rzhevusski, chief of the labour and wages department, shall draw up and incorporate amendments to the existing statute on multiple-lathe operators... Shop chief P. E. Sergeyev shall work out a programme of modernization... Signed: Tchernov.

July 5, 1977. Chief engineer Yu. A. Maksimov shall look into the problem connected with cutting tools in shop No... Signed: Tchernov.

August 2, 1977. Chief engineer Maksimov shall place under strict control the tools for numerically-controlled machine tools... Shop chief V. S. Dyakonov shall be warned that... Deputy factory manager for personnel N. P. Kuznetsov shall be informed at the next council meeting of... Signed: Tchernov.

Now, who is he, this Tchernov, who is powerful enough to issue orders to shop chiefs, the plant's chief engineer and even deputy managing director for personnel?

Victor Tchernov is a worker from shop No 10, a team leader. He is the chairman of the plant's team-leader council. Should workers have a problem that has to be decided at the "summit" level, they go straight to Tchernov: the factory manager sees

him at any time. In actual fact Tchernov is an extension of the factory manager. Shop chiefs treat him with a respect based more on fear than admiration. The explanation here is simple: the decisions taken by the team-leader council have a force equal to those taken by the factory manager and are binding on all.

Solipatrov was recently my guest in Moscow. I told him about my visit to the Kaluga turbine plant. Solipatrov approved of the initiative of his Kaluga fellow-workers and asked me to write about it in *Literaturnaya Gazeta.*

By then I had heard that other factories and plants were switching over to a similar system with a worker-manager as its core.

Solipatrov was most happy to hear it. But, always true to himself, he inquired: "And what about overtime and rushed work at the Kaluga plant? What do the workers think of that?" I quoted to him the results of an opinion-poll taken at the plant. One thousand workers were interviewed and they replied that they liked the sort of relationships that existed between the work teams and the management, because they were now able to speak their mind on every question relating to life at the plant and the management took their opinions into account. They were asked whether they would have returned to the plant if they had been transferred elsewhere or had a choice of alternative jobs. The majority replied in the affirmative.

Danilov also liked the Kaluga system but, running true to form, asked me about inventors at the plant, whether they were encouraged as much as they should be. I replied that eighty-two per cent of the workers interviewed testified that the atmosphere at the plant was conducive to inventing.

Danilov was very pleased to hear that. He is convinced that without inventors and inventions life on earth would be boring if not senseless. As far as he himself is concerned, his own inventing pursuits keep him going and help him enjoy life to the full. It would be a mistake to think that his life as an inventor is all roses, far from it. Almost all of his press articles published to date attack his fellow-human beings who are too conservative, narrow-minded, irresponsible and incompetent, and for this reason act as a brake on the technical ingenuity and creativity of workingmen. Such people are Danilov's worst enemies, however elevated their posts may be. Danilov is uncompromising and merciless in his Quixotic battle against them.

He fights not only with his pen but with his inventor's brain as well.

One day he applied for a patent for his latest invention but was turned down. Experts at the Patent Institute explained that the method he was proposing was not feasible.

It seemed that was the end of it. But Danilov would not give up. In his book *A Life-Time Search* he described this episode as follows: " 'Have you ever read anything about Einstein?' I asked Vassiliyev, deputy director of the Patent Institute. 'I have, why?' he replied surprised. 'Do you remember how he answered when he was once asked how one made an invention? He replied: Everybody knows that this is impossible but there is one ignoramus who doesn't know it. Well, he is the fellow who makes the invention!'

"Vassiliyev thought for a moment and said: 'Interesting, I think there is something in that. Why don't you go to Kiev yourself, see the director of the Superhard Materials Institute and tell him about Einstein?' "

Danilov's friends tried to talk him out of the idea but he was no resigner. He went to Kiev to see Professor Bakul, the superhard materials expert. The professor gave him a cool reception and declared: "We have the best experts in the country at our institute. If they say it can't be done, then it should be clear to everyone that the thing is impossible."

"So, it can't be done? Let me show you how it can be done. I only want your permission to use your equipment," I asked the professor. He looked at me with interest. Then I decided to give him that gag about Einstein. Fortunately Bakul was not without a sense of humour. He even laughed. Then, turning to one of his lab-chiefs, he said: "Okay, will you keep an eye on him, see he doesn't break anything. . ."

Danilov went in and won. The country's best experts on superhard materials had to bite the dust before an ordinary worker with a brilliant mind.

Soon afterwards Valentin Bakul, doctor of technical sciences, was celebrating his sixtieth birthday and the editors of the journal of the engineering industry instructed Danilov to present an address.

Bakul was sitting in his spacious office in festive mood, the gold star of Hero of Socialist Labour shining on his lapel. After offering formal congratulations on the professor's birthday, Danilov placed his invention on the desk before him. Bakul and all those present looked at it with interest. No amateurs among them, they immediately saw what it was.

"Has the technology of making your rings been described anywhere?" Bakul asked. "In this little book," Danilov replied handing him the second edition of his book to the professor.

Turning to the chief engineer of the experimental plant, Bakul said: "Will you please show Danilov the potential of our plant for making these tools by

his method? We'll call an academic council at the institute tomorrow to discuss his invention." Turning to face me, he said: "Could you leave a few rings with me for our exhibition?... And I would appreciate a copy of your book, as well."

"I wrote a warm dedication and presented the book to professor Bakul as a gift..."

In this way Einstein helped a Soviet worker to make a professor see his point of view. And now here is what the great man wrote in an article devoted to Isaac Newton: "Undoubtedly the mind seems to be weak when we contemplate the tasks confronting us, really weak when we set it against Man's madness and passion which, we must acknowledge, are the masters of human destinies in both great things and small. But the creations of the human intellect survive the noisy vanity of generations and have, down the centuries, illuminated the world with light and warmth."

And so, with these words of a man of genius, I end my story about the creativity of ordinary people.

Postscript

SCREENING ROOM,

or what the viewer has said when it is too late for the film's scriptwriters to say anything

The first TV showing.

Reviews in the press.

Discussions at the Central House of Journalists are now all in the past.

I would like to quote an opinion expressed by one of the workers who saw the film. In a letter to the newspaper *Sovietskaya Kultura,* Kim Andreyev (remember the metalworker whom we intended to play a part in our film but who was turned down by the director) wrote:

"Dear Editors,

Since this film is about ordinary workers you might find it interesting to know what one of their number thinks about it. I saw the film twice on October 3 and October 25, 1977. I didn't like the camera work which I found sloppy and showed the cameraman's condescension towards the people he was filming. I don't know whether it was because of his lack of taste or lack of professionalism. Either way the result was not too good. For the rest, the

film differs greatly from its predecessors on the same subject: it is thought provoking and topical.

Sidorov, Solipatrov and Danilov have done their job well, they didn't play their roles, they worked through them. I have read their newspaper articles and keep some of them in my library. Now I have seen them in a film. I look forward to meeting them. They are what I call reliable people. They are thinking workers. They are sincere, their attitudes are clear and easy to understand. One of my friends Victor Ranetkin, a turner, calls such people 'worker-donors.' He is a hundred per cent right. Indeed, a worker who writes arouses his fellow-workers and excites an intense and biased interest in himself. These workers who have, of their own free will, undertaken the double burden of work at the bench and writing for the press have to justify their journalistic contributions by their personal example. What does that mean? It means that they have to take an exam daily: an exam for their understanding of civic duty, for the quality of their personality, for their humanity. Such people among the workers are worth their weight in gold. They are the barometer of the workingman's milieu, they are its moral stimulators.

I have exchanged opinions about the film with some of my fellow-workers at my factory. They liked it and said that more films about workers should be made. They felt such films were better than those where actors, writers and poets speak for workers since they were not at all inspiring and were even dull.

The workingman is very responsive to any manifestation of public interest in his personality. He deserves to be shown and talked about without any signs of condescension.

I would describe Boris Danilov as one of the great 'stubborns' of Russia. A man of charm, he has already left a mark in the shape of his books and inventions. His book *A Life-Time Search* is on my bookshelf.

Anatoli Solipatrov is a man with a philosophical turn of mind. It seems to me he has developed his sense of logic and ability for psychological 'probing' to a point where he can now work as an industrial sociologist. He is clearly a man of great experience who has discovered the wisdom of life.

This is, briefly, what I think about the film. To me it is an attempt to show in depth the labour front which constantly supplies the material goods and blessings which are the principal values of society. The Soviet worker deserves to be shown in close-up."

There have been many other widely differing opinions. Some of them were critical of those who made the film. And so for us the end of one piece of work meant the start of another as we began taking stock and contemplating new projects. As we analyzed the results of our work on the film and the comments it drew we kept seesawing on the swings of recognition and failure. Our only consolation was that, in such things, a good quarrel was better than a bad peace. And we were certainly happy to see that even those who criticized us praised the people taking part.

Александр Ильич Левиков

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ИЩИ СЕБЯ ПОКА НЕ ВСТРЕТИШЬ
на английском языке

Alexander LEVIKOV is a Soviet publicist and the economic editor of "Literaturnaya Gazeta" which has published over 50 of his articles on economics, management and socio-psychological and moral questions of business life. His work frequently appears in periodicals both in the Soviet Union and abroad. He has written several books. The last of these, "People of Action", completes his cycle of writings on top people in the USSR economy.

Articles from this cycle, for example, "How to Become a Minister", "A New Post" and "Professionals of Management", are already familiar to the Soviet public. "Literaturnaya Gazeta" held an open discussion on them and people from all walks of life took part.

Alexander Levikov's articles are regularly translated into many languages by the Novosti Press Agency.